

City of Woodland

Meeting Minutes

June 10, 2024

I. Call to Order

Mayor James Carter called to order the regular meeting of the Woodland City Council at 6:15 PM on June 10, 2024, at the Woodland City Hall.

II. Roll Call

The following persons were in attendance: Mayor James Carter, Mayor Pro Tem Ebonye Holt, Councilman T. L. Carter, Councilwoman Allison Owens, Councilman John Haralson, Councilman Jeffery Mitchell, City Clerk Allissa Gresham, Municipal Clerk Cynthia Powell, and City Attorney Gary Byrd.

III. Approval of Agenda

Mayor Pro Tem Holt made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilman Carter seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

IV. Approval of Minutes

The May 13, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes, the May 13, 2024, Executive Session Minutes, and the May 20, 2024, Work Session Minutes were distributed.

Mayor Pro Tem Holt made a motion to approve the May 13, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes, the May 13, 2024, Executive Session Minutes, and the May 20, 2024, Work Session Minutes. Councilwoman Owens seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

V. Guest Speakers:

- a) **William Hart** of Charles Abbott & Associates discussed providing the City of Woodland with a Code Enforcement Officer. Mr. Hart stated he emailed Clerk Gresham a quote for \$ 79.00 per hour with a minimum of four billable hours. Mr. Hart stated this is an as-needed service, and when the City of Woodland needed an officer, they would be there for a minimum of four hours. He stated they could go up to eight hours per week if needed. Councilwoman Owens discussed what would be included in a Code Enforcement Officer's duty. Mr. Hart stated it would include blighted property, junk vehicles, and any local code violations. He stated they could also help the City update the City ordinances. Attorney Byrd stated that since the city did not have a police department or city judge, the Talbot County Magistrate Judge would be taking on the code violation cases for the City of Woodland. Mr. Hart stated taking the cases to the Talbot County Magistrate Judge would be no problem. Clerk Powell stated she contacted Joshua Murray from the City of Thomaston for a Code Enforcement Office quote but had never heard back from him. The Council will further discuss hiring a Code Enforcement Officer before making a decision.
- b) **Jamie Huff**, the Talbot County Tax Commissioner, discussed concerns the Council had with property owned by Talbot County within the City of Woodland. Mayor Pro Tem Holt discussed Mr. Huff clarifying the property tax sales process. Mr. Huff stated that in the past if the property was not purchased at a tax sale, the County would purchase it and hold it for three years before doing a surplus auction. Mr. Huff stated this was not done anymore. Councilwoman Owens

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discussed if the City of Woodland would get notification of the property tax sale. Mr. Huff stated the tax sales are ran in the local newspaper's legal section. Councilwoman Owens discussed, since Talbot County is responsible for collecting the City property taxes, how would the City of Woodland know if they got paid for the property owned by the County. Mr. Huff stated the City receives a monthly check and report from the County. Mayor Pro Tem Holt discussed how often property tax sales are done. Mr. Huff stated that tax sales are normally done once a year, usually in November, and he stated the City can purchase the property. Mr. Huff discussed some properties not selling because the taxes owed were more than what the property was worth, and the best thing to do with this property would be to auction it off. Mr. Huff stated he is hoping to do a tax sale in October 2024. Mr. Huff stated the County levies on the third year. Councilwoman Owens discussed whether the County is responsible for the upkeep of property they own. Mr. Huff stated he believed it should be, and the Council would need to contact the Talbot County Commissioners Office on this matter. Mr. Huff reviewed the Delinquent Tax Report with the Council. Councilwoman Owens discussed the City of Woodland receiving a quarterly Delinquent Tax Report from Talbot County. Clerk Gresham will request a quarterly delinquent Tax Report from Talbot County. Attorney Byrd discussed the City of Woodland receiving the Mil Rate information from Talbot County. Clerk Gresham stated Tiffany Prather of the Talbot County Tax Commissioners Office stated she was hoping to have the information approximately June 20, 2024. Mr. Huff stated this was earlier than in the past. He stated that August 01, 2024, is the deadline for the County to submit the digest to the state. Attorney Byrd discussed if the City would have the Mil Rate information by the July 08, 2024 Regular Council Meeting. Mr. Huff stated it would depend on when the County received the information. Attorney Byrd stated in previous years, the City had not received the information in time to go through the hearing process if they wanted to raise the Mil Rate. Mr. Huff stated if this was the case, the City could request more time, and he could be contacted if the City needed assistance. He stated this would delay Talbot County printing the bills. Mayor Pro Tem Holt stated if the City receives quarterly reports the City could refer to what was collected the previous year and would be able to make an informed decision.

VI. Attorney Report

- a) Attorney Byrd stated he followed up with Terrell Jacobs of the Georgia Municipal Association, and he has not found a prospective Code Enforcement Officer or a company that provides that service. He stated he contacted the Talbot County attorney, Ed Davis, and he is looking for a resource for the City of Woodland.
- b) Attorney Byrd stated his staff has worked on the "City Park" Project on several occasions during the last month. He stated his wife could not find the box with the original annexation paperwork, which would have been done in the 1990's. He stated the boxes in his warehouse in Pine Mountain are stacked about 15 feet high. He stated they will look again at some point. Attorney Byrd stated they did find the legal description for the new charter passed by the Georgia State Legislature that shows the park City limits, the Higgenbotham deed to City Lots 5,6,7,8 and 9, totaling 5.59 acres. He stated they found the plat for the Higginbotham survey, the deed from Robert Williams to City Lot 10, and the deed from Margaret Holmes to City Lot 11. Attorney

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Byrd stated they were not able to locate the “GA DOT” lot deed and the original annexation paperwork, so this will be an ongoing project.

- c) Attorney Byrd stated he drafted a new Hold Harmless Indemnity Agreement for the persons engaged in public cleanup work on City property and emailed it to Clerk Powell.
- d) Attorney Byrd discussed Antonio Sanchez, the owner of the Ambulance Facility, wanting a zoning certification filled out by the City of Woodland to sell used cars. Attorney Byrd stated that the zoning statute is inconsistent with what Mr. Sanchez is doing. He stated that the property is zoned industrial, and Mr. Sanchez can manufacture, assemble, disassemble, and package products. Attorney Byrd stated the property would need to be zoned commercial for Mr. Sanchez to sell used cars. Attorney Byrd suggested tabling this matter until Mr. Sanchez can attend a Council Meeting to discuss what he wants to do. Clerk Gresham will contact Mr. Sanchez.
- e) Attorney Byrd presented Clerk Gresham with the monthly invoice for services.

Mayor Pro Tem Holt made a motion to accept the Attorney Report. Councilman Carter seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

VII. Grounds Maintenance Report

- a) Kane Robinson of Robinson’s General Services, LLC was absent. Clerk Gresham presented the emailed Grounds Maintenance Report she received from Mr. Robinson. Councilwoman Owens discussed the streets and sidewalks needing to be trimmed and edged. Councilwoman Owens discussed Mr. Robinson making time to attend the monthly City of Woodland Regular Council Meetings and the City employees following up on Grounds maintenance to make sure they are doing what they were contracted to do. Mayor Pro Tem Holt stated this matter needed to be discussed during the Executive Session.
- b) Mayor Pro Tem Holt discussed whether a property owner was liable for tree limbs overhanging the City's right of way. Attorney Byrd stated the property owner should maintain their trees and could be asked to trim limbs impeding the City's right of way. He stated that this matter could be turned over to a Code Enforcer. Attorney Byrd stated the City also has the right to cut the limbs overhanging the City right of way. Councilwoman Owens suggested contracting someone to be on call to trim and cut trees in the City when needed. Mayor Pro Tem Holt discussed the tree trimming quote Clerk Gresham received from Jacob Stone of JJS Outdoor Solutions. Jeff Harrison of HWR Water Solutions suggested putting together a SPLOST project for tree trimming and putting it out on the Georgia Procurement website for bid. Clerk Gresham stated ARPA funds could be used for tree trimming. The Council discussed getting more quotes before making a decision.
- c) Clerk Gresham discussed the quote she received from Robinson General Services, LLC for installing the new street signs at \$100.00 per sign. Mayor Pro Tem Holt discussed the quote Clerk Gresham received from JJS Outdoor Solutions for installing the new street sign at \$250.00 per sign. Mayor Pro Tem Holt discussed if Clerk Gresham had contacted Mr. Robinson to inquire if

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his quote included taking down the old concrete sign markers. Clerk Gresham stated she contacted Mr. Robinson but had not heard back from him before the Council meeting.

VIII. Water Report

- a) Jeff Harrison of HWR Water Solutions stated the City of Woodland produced 1.1 million gallons of water and billed out 638,000 gallons of water. Clerk Powell stated there was 92,000 gallons of water loss.
- b) Jeff stated HWR read meters for the month and repaired a leaking service line on Peach Drive.
- c) Councilwoman Owens discussed whether there was a program that refurbished old meters. Jeff stated there is a company that will purchase the old meters at \$2.50 per meter. Councilwoman Owens suggested Jeff contact the company to purchase the old meters. Jeff stated he would get Clerk Gresham and Clerk Powell the contact information.
- d) Mayor Pro Tem Holt discussed whether Jeff contacted InDepth about cleaning the City water tank. Jeff stated he contacted InDepth but had not heard back from them.
- e) Clerk Powell distributed the Water System Totals Report and the Delinquent Account Report for May 2024. The water report shows the total billed was \$7665.00 and the total received was \$8592.95.

Councilwoman Owens made a motion to accept the water report. Councilman Mitchell seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

IX. Clerk Report

- a) Clerk Gresham distributed the 2023 Final Audit Report to the Mayor and Council. Clerk Gresham stated the City of Woodland accountant, Richard Hartley would need the paperwork signed and sent to the state agency by June 30, 2024. The Council discussed the audit findings for the City of Woodland. Mayor Pro Tem Holt suggested Clerk Gresham email Richard about the finding stating the City owed payroll and sales taxes for previous years to inquire how much the City owes and for what years.
- b) Clerk Gresham discussed the Council voting on a project for the 2024 LRA Grant at tonight's meeting. She stated the deadline to apply for the grant is June 15, 2024. Clerk Gresham suggested repairing the culvert pipe and ditch on Peach Drive. Mayor Pro Tem Holt made a motion to repair the culvert pipe and ditch on Peach Drive with the 2024 LRA Grant funds. Councilman Carter seconded. All approved. Motion carried.
- c) Clerk Gresham discussed the City of Woodland Event Calendar being revised to change the Community Yard Sale date. She stated the date was set for July 20, 2024, but the park was already rented for that day. Clerk Gresham stated June 22, July 06, and July 13, 2024 were open. The Council moved the Community Yard Sale to July 13, 2024.

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- d) Clerk Gresham discussed Talbot County Assistant Manager Ronnie Hendricks came by City Hall and stated the City of Woodland would need Attorney Byrd to draw up an Intergovernmental Agreement with Talbot County. Mr. Hendricks stated the County would not be doing anything pertaining to public works for the City unless there was an agreement. Attorney Byrd stated he spoke with the Talbot County attorney about drafting a proposal.
- e) Clerk Gresham presented the month's financial reports.

Councilwoman Owens made a motion to accept the Clerk Report. Mayor Pro Tem Holt seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

X. Open Business

- a) Guest speaker William Hart previously addressed the discussion of blighted property, junk cars, and code enforcement in the meeting.
- b) Clerk Powell discussed quotes for purchasing bleachers for the Community Park softball field. Mayor Pro Tem Holt discussed having Robinson General Services, LLC tear down the old wooden benches and clean up the area for the new bleachers. She suggested tabling and discussing which company to purchase bleachers from until the June 17, 2024, Work Session.
- c) Clerk Gresham distributed the quote she received from One Call to the Mayor and Council. Clerk Gresham reviewed the quote with the Mayor and Council. Mayor Pro Tem Holt suggested getting emails for the City customers to email them notifications.

XI. New Business

- a) Clerk Gresham stated she purchased the four ceiling fans for the Community Building porches. Mayor Pro Tem Holt made a motion to approve the installation of ceiling fans for \$300.00 or less. Councilman Carter seconded. All approved. Motion carried.
- b) The discussion of quotes for tree trimming and street sign installation was discussed previously during the Grounds Maintenance Report.
- c) Clerk Powell discussed whether the park could be rented during the daytime hours for a family cookout on July 4, 2024. The Council suggested not having a July 4th event and renting the park for the family cookout.
- d) The discussion of the 2023 Final Audit Report and Findings was discussed previously during the Clerk Report.

XII. Executive Session

Mayor Pro Tem Holt made a motion to begin Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. Councilwoman Owens seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

Those present for the Executive Session were as follows:

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Mayor James Carter, Mayor Pro Tem Ebonye Holt, Councilman T. L. Carter, Councilwoman Allison Owens, Councilman John Haralson, Councilman Jeffery Mitchell, City Clerk Allissa Gresham, Municipal Clerk Cynthia Powell and Attorney Gary Byrd.

Executive Session began at 8:40 PM.

Councilwoman Owens made a motion to return to Regular Session. Councilman Carter seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

XIII. Regular Session

Regular Session resumed at 9:09 PM.

Councilwoman Owens made a motion to pay the bills. Councilman Mitchell seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

XIV. Adjournment

Councilman Mitchell made a motion to adjourn. Mayor Pro Tem Holt seconded. All approved. Motion carried.

Mayor James Carter adjourned the meeting at 9:14 PM.

Minutes Submitted By: _____

Allissa Gresham

City Clerk

Approval Date