

MONTICELLO CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
September 8, 2020
MINUTES
6:00 P.M.

Members Present – Mayor Bryan Standifer, Mayor Pro Tem Gail Harrell, Councilmembers David Wease, Cynthia Miller, Jennifer Murphy, and Larry Thurman were present.

Staff Present – City Manager, Angela Redding, and City Clerk, Karen Pennamon, City Attorney Joe Reitman was present.

Media Present – Kathy Mudd - The Monticello News

Called Session – Mayor Bryan Standifer called the meeting to order. The Invocation was given by Reverend William Gibson, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. City Clerk Karen Pennamon called the roll.

Agenda Approval – Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Gail Harrell to remove Item 9 – Executive Session and add Item 9 - Update on Beautify Monticello to the agenda. Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Harrell to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Councilmember Wease. Voting for the motion was unanimous.

Citizen Comments

Roy Thomas -556 Hillsboro Street stated street water is pouring out his driveway and request that the City run a camera down to see where it is stopped up at. He spoke to Robert Jordan of Jordan Engineering to see if any schematics were available.

David Thompson – 237 Forsythe Street stated he called the City several weeks ago about yard debris pick-up days. Waymon Cody, from the City, showed him City documentation that said the length of the pile cannot be more than five feet long and no more than fifty pounds. How do you weigh piles of grass or piles of leaves? It is a vague regulation. I went around the City and documented that some piles were left, and some were picked up. That was strange because they were all more than five feet long. I know that letters were sent out in the utility bill but what is the requirement for the homeowner to look at to know what will be picked up? City Manager Redding explained that letters had been sent out in the utility bills. To make sure that everyone is on the same page, there are brown bags that measure the height and if three of them are filled up that will meet the requirement. The letter was sent out that tree limbs no longer than five feet long and weight no more than fifty pounds will be picked up. In the Water Department part of the requirement when they are hired is to lift a bag that weighs fifty pounds and that bag is how they measure the weight. Mr. Thompson said the length of the tree limbs is reasonable, but the total weight of the pile no more than fifty pounds is arbitrary because who wants to weigh leaves. City

City of Monticello
123 West Washington Street
Post Office Box 269
Monticello, GA 31064

Phone 706-468-6062

FAX 706-468-1041

Manager Redding stated that the ordinance is addressing tree limbs. Attorney Reitman called a point of order for time limit. Mayor Standifer stated that the Council will review the ordinance.

Mandi Tanner – Chamber Update – Thanked Mayor Standifer for his visit to the second-grade virtual school. This is the last month for the Market on the Square. Councilmember David Wease has come out every week to take pictures and other Council members have also attended the event. They average 24 vendors per week and maxed up to 32 vendors. A special vendor date is October 10, 2020 in conjunction with a fundraiser for Monticello football team. The Chamber of Commerce encourages everyone to visit the Market on the Square. They are launching a scarecrow contest in October and encourage each business to model a scarecrow that models after their business. The Georgia Outdoor News has a three-page spread coming out in November of the Deer Festival. Brandi with Tourism and Adam McGinnis worked hard to get a fantastic article on the festival. The Chamber of Commerce is officially presenting their Memorandum of Understanding to the City. Thank you all for the continued support.

Reverend Jimmy Horton representing Springfield Baptist Church – Addressed Agenda Item 4 – Renaming of Blue Ruin Street. On behalf of Joe K. Davis, if any person deserve this honor, it is Deacon Joe K. Davis. He has demonstrated the quality, character, and personality for this honor. I have been a part of the community for over forty-two years and has seen Mr. Davis train young people to work. He has given them jobs and taught them how to play sports. I ask the City Council to consider naming Blue Ruin Street after Joe K. Davis. I appreciate the job the City Council is doing for the City of Monticello.

Reverend Shorter – In honor of the community and Springfield Baptist Church, I request to name Blue Ruin Street after Joe K. Davis. I met Mr. Davis about five years ago and have seen what he has done to help the community. I never knew Mr. Davis to miss a Sunday in church. Mr. Davis would be proud to get this honor. It would uplift the community if the street were named after Mr. Davis.

Vernon Davis – 717 Tanyard Drive – A tree fell in my yard two weeks ago and the limbs were cut off it. I have a large pile of limbs near the road. The City says limbs cannot be 5-foot-long and no more than 50 pounds. How can the City do that when it is a whole limb? I am a disabled veteran. I noticed several trees were removed from my neighbor's property but not mine. A letter was put in my mailbox by Waymon but the only person who should is the postmaster. Support veterans in the community because they are people and are not able to get out there to pick up limbs or pay anyone to do it. Mayor Standifer stated the City Council will be reviewing the ordinances. He thanked Mr. Davis for his service.

Wardeen Davis – 78 Smith Street – My father is Joe K. Davis and it would be an honor to rename Blue Ruin Street to Joe K. Davis Street. Whatever the Council decides to do he will be satisfied with because that is the type of man he is. He has served this community for many years. I spoke to the City Manager about speeding cars on Blue Ruin Street. The City Manager contacted the Sheriff who placed the speed detectors out. The traffic slowed down but when they removed the

City of Monticello
123 West Washington Street
Post Office Box 269
Monticello, GA 31064

Phone 706-468-6062

FAX 706-468-1041

detectors they started speeding again. She is looking out for the children in the neighborhood and request that the City place speed bumps down to slow the traffic.

Adam McGinnis – 836 Holman Road – I have a couple of businesses in Monticello. I am concerned about a lot of things in Monticello that affect everyone in the community. I think the name Blue Ruin is a terrible name so change it to Joe K. Davis Street because I have known him since I was a small guy. Mr. McGinnis discussed the City utilities and asked if there was any discussion on the date for the financial review. Mayor Standifer responded yes. When he spoke last month there were some changes made to the excel spread sheet and after looking at it, his understanding is they took the difference of \$265,000 out the budget for a mistake that was made in the calculations. They took \$190,000 out of the Council budget; \$150,000 for the development of Mine Lake which in my opinion is a total waste of money, and \$40,000 out of City Council contingency. What I thought was most interesting is that they increased the revenue by \$76,750.00. They already adopted a budget in July and amended the budget in August. Is there any more discussions I need to have because I am meeting with people this Friday at 7 p.m. to discuss how budgets work? It is my understanding that there are only three people in the Electric Department and with an employee/salary budget of \$260,000. Mayor Standifer responded there are four people in the Electric Department.

DDA – Michele Celani – Executive Director – All Downtown Development Authority members and director have met their mandatory DDA Training requirement. They have registered for the Georgia Downtown Conference on September 29-30, 2020 and the Historic Preservation Conference on September 21-25, 2020. The Public Arts Project has received permission from Judge Benton to use the side of 133 West Washington Street and remove any bushes if necessary. The D.D.A. has selected a design for the first mural project which will be the welcome mural. It will be on the side of 139 West Washington Street facing Highway 212, Highway 16, and Highway 83 South. Tamara Hoss has prepared the rendition for them and they will begin the project in April 2021. They have three murals to include in the project, the next being on Funderburg Alley where they would like to dedicate a mural to Dr. Funderburg, Dr. Barron and other notable African American community members. They are seeking community involvement and suggestions on who should go on the mural. They are asking for artists to submit renditions by December 31, 2020 for the Funderburg and Commerce murals. They need artist for a mural of local celebrities in the local area. They are also putting out a public call for professional and student artist for the Art Alley Project in the alleyway between the City Government Complex and 133 West Washington Street. They must submit their renditions by October 23, 2020, and the artist will be chosen by December 11, 2020. To fund the art installations, they have submitted three grants and asked for donations of paint from Benjamin Moore. They have submitted a grant proposal to Tri-County EMC for \$8,704.06, the Georgia Council of the Arts' Vibrant Community Grant program for \$3,114.66 and are also seeking donations. The Bank of Monticello will donate \$1,000.00 to the project.

City of Monticello
123 West Washington Street
Post Office Box 269
Monticello, GA 31064

Phone 706-468-6062

FAX 706-468-1041

Approval of Minutes - Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Harrell to approve the following minutes: Regular Meeting August 11, 2020 and Called Meeting August 20, 2020, seconded by Councilmember Wease. Voting for the motion was unanimous.

Agenda Items

1. Resolution for Georgia Cities Week – October 4-10, 2020. City Manager Redding stated that the resolution is to observe Georgia Cities Week. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the time frame for the event had been pushed back from April 2020 to October 2020. The City Clerk and I will be discussing activities for the event and welcome input from the governing body. The planned activities will adhere to the social distancing guidelines.
2. Select Delegate and Alternate for the Municipal Gas Authority Membership. Motion by Councilmember Wease to appoint Councilmember Larry Thurman as the Delegate for the Municipal Gas Authority, seconded by Councilmember Murphy. Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Harrell to appoint Councilmember Wease as the Alternate for the Municipal Gas Authority, seconded by Councilmember Murphy. Voting for the motion was unanimous.
3. Wells Fargo Business Online Administrator Access and Request to Remove/Revoke Business Direct Authorization for Wells Fargo Business Online. Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Harrell to appoint City Manager Angela Redding as an online administrator to the Wells Fargo Business Online Account and to remove Timothy Young as the administrator on the Wells Fargo Business Online Account, seconded by Councilmember Murphy. Voting for the motion was unanimous.
4. Discussion – Renaming Blue Ruin Street – Mayor Standifer stated a request has been made to rename Blue Ruin Street to Joe K. Davis Street. Mayor Pro Tem Harrell asked what the legal obligations are for renaming the street. City Attorney Reitman stated that Public safety such as E911, Reverse 911, Public Safety calls, Police, Fire, and the Ambulance Service. I will have to research it but there must be ample time given for the 911 Call Center to update its records and for the Sheriff to be informed. The Post Office will have to be notified also. The rule of thumb is it takes 60 days to process all the necessary steps. City Manager Redding stated she had reviewed the City of Monticello code of ordinances but in her previous experience, they would send out notices only to the residents on the street where the request was made. They would also have a meeting with the community and various local agencies including the Post Office. Motion by Councilmember Miller to change the name of Blue Ruin Street to Joe K. Davis Street and give the City Manager and City Clerk the authority to move forward to ensure that all avenues are covered such as notifying the residents of the name change, Public Safety

City of Monticello
123 West Washington Street
Post Office Box 269
Monticello, GA 31064

Phone 706-468-6062

FAX 706-468-1041

departments, and the Post Office, seconded by Councilmember Murphy. Voting for the motion was unanimous.

5. Discussion – Code Enforcement – City Manager Redding briefed the City Council on the first Joint City/Jasper County Code Enforcement Meeting to discuss the Code Enforcement Officer responsibilities. Funding has been set aside in the budget for a code enforcement officer, an office at City Hall, and other expenses. The Code Enforcement Officer will report to the City Manager and if any technical advice is needed, we will reach out to the Planning and Zoning Director, Shane Sealy. This was discussed as part of the agreement with the County. They also discussed revenue/cost sharing and what we have right now is the County will collect all funds that are levied for code enforcement violations. However, as part of the discussion, they will need a judge and solicitor. The revenue will cover the City’s cost as far as having to pay for a judge and solicitor. They wanted to bring this to the attention of the City Council for their input and to make sure everyone is on the same page. Attorney Reitman stated that in 2014-2015 the City of Monticello’s Police Department and Municipal Court were disbanded by a charter action. At that time there was not a direct mechanism for code enforcement through City administration. They no longer had a police department, municipal court clerk, judge, or solicitor. He in the interim handed these as nuisance cases in the Superior Court and that is expensive. You can recoup some of the expenses, but it takes a long time to have someone foreclosed on or a property sold. They are looking at an alternative because the City can do it on its own by reimplementing the Municipal Court which has a lot of challenges legislative, administrative, and cost wise. They would have to pay a municipal court judge, solicitor, clerk, training, materials, and the oversight expenses. The County has offered to do it but because they incur this cost and have the procedures and infrastructure in place, they say they need to receive the fine fees. The other issue is that code enforcement is not a money maker, it is a City service that is funded by the taxpayers to benefit community beautification. The related cost is that the City would have a code enforcement officer and give you that higher level of service to perform code enforcement inside the one-mile radius of the City limits. The unincorporated County has approximately 14,000 residents with one or two staff handling the 40-50 square mile radius for code enforcement. The County would issue the citation with the assistance of the City Code Enforcement Officer who would do the groundwork, investigation, inspection and reporting of the violations of the International Property Maintenance Code. Also, if the County is going to do this you would have to follow the legal process by synchronizing your ordinances, advertising, and conducting two readings of the ordinance. City Manager Redding stated if they move forward with what the City Attorney summarized, after a year they will look at the revenue to see if there can be some cost sharing verses all of the revenue going to the County. Secondly, just in reviewing some of our ordinances, some are the same. Mayor Pro Tem Harrell stated there is another Joint City/Jasper County Meeting scheduled for October 5, 2020 to review the Intergovernmental

City of Monticello
123 West Washington Street
Post Office Box 269
Monticello, GA 31064

Phone 706-468-6062

FAX 706-468-1041

Agreement and ordinances. Attorney Reitman mentioned that he will complete a synchronized ordinance by the October 5, 2020 meeting. City Manager asked if there were any comments or suggestions from Council, there were none. Mayor Standifer praised everyone for the great work they have put into this project.

6. Discussion – Date for Financial Review – Mayor Standifer stated the Quarterly Financial Reviews will be open to the public on September 17, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. City Utility Rates will be discussed at this meeting. There is a City Council Retreat scheduled for September 26, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. at the Mine Lake Property.
7. Discussion – Of City Accounts – City Manager Redding stated that a recent records request released contained some of the City’s banking information. She had no knowledge of how the information was released. She stated she contacted Kim McMichael, Vice President of Ameris Bank they discussed ways to protect the bank accounts. Mrs. Kim McMichael addressed the City Council about the incident and presented information on a fraud protection program Ameris bank offers to the City of Monticello. The City has an accounts payable account with deposits, withdrawals and is an electronic automated account and blocking it would be a huge feat. Ameris bank has a Positive Pay Program which requires a file upload twice a month. We run any electronic checks that come in and run it against that file every day. This is another level of security for the City accounts. Fraud is everywhere and we are trying to help you stop that fraud. If there is a hit on the account, a representative from the City will make the decision to pay or return. There is no charge to the City for this service. There will always be exposure, but this will eliminate the cost of opening and closing accounts. Mayor Standifer asked if the other three banks that they deal with had the same level of protection. City Manager Redding stated that we have access to our accounts and can look at them online daily. If the decision of the City Council is to move forward with changing our banking account information, then we will have it in the minutes to present stating this was an approved action of the City Council. Mayor Pro Tem Harrell stated that the recommendation from the City Manager and Mrs. McMichael is that it would be very cumbersome to open and close accounts including the cost and time spent to close them. Is the recommendation of the City Manager that we keep things the way they are and put the program in place? City Manager Redding stated that whatever directive she is given that is what we will do. She said she and Mrs. McMichael discussed how much time is involved in providing new checking account, signature cards, and contacting the agencies that draft and deposit on the accounts. Mayor Pro Tem Harrell asked if the accounts that went out to the public were only Ameris Bank accounts. City Manager Redding said all the bank accounts were listed on the sheet, but we have access to all accounts and can go and look at every account daily. Councilmember Wease asked how this happened. Mayor Standifer stated someone requested the budget sheet and it was printed on the budget sheet. Councilmember

City of Monticello
123 West Washington Street
Post Office Box 269
Monticello, GA 31064

Phone 706-468-6062

FAX 706-468-1041

Miller asked if the information came from City Hall. City Manager stated not that she is aware of. Councilmember Miller stated that information with the account numbers is only for the Council, therefore, it leads me to think that maybe a councilmember inadvertently gave that information out not knowing that someone had it there. Her concern is that in 2018, they had a wire fraud. People do things and you cannot be 100% protected but just knowing that I think that we would want to have a backup plan. Mrs. McMichael informed the Council that there is no charge for the service. City Manager Redding stated that we do not have the amount of activity on the other accounts as we do with the Ameris Bank accounts because our main accounts such as accounts payable and payroll are with Ameris Bank. The other accounts are mainly deposit accounts which do not have a lot of activity. Councilmember Wease asked if there was an open records request for the information that went out. Mayor Standifer stated that anyone can make an open record request, but the mistake was made when the information was given to someone with the account numbers listed. Normal circumstances when we do an open record request the account numbers are taken off. City Manager Redding stated that an open records request should go through the City Clerk because the City Clerk is aware of the items to redact but again this information did not come from City Hall. She reviewed the information that was sent out for the open records request and basically it is not the budget but a document that is utilized in preparing the budget. It is a monthly financial report on the account that is prepared, but it did not come from City Hall. Mayor Standifer stated we need to check with the other banks to see if they have some level of protection or the Council can choose to change all the accounts. City Manager Redding stated going forward the report they normally receive for the banking information will not include the account numbers. Mayor Pro Tem Harrell made a motion to accept the Ameris Bank Positive Pay agreement for the City accounts, seconded by Councilmember Wease. Voting for the motion was unanimous.

8. City Manager's Report – Census Update - 10 questions, 10 minutes, and 10 years of funding. We are trying to make sure our residents respond to the Census. A questionnaire that was sent out to residents is required by law and your information will not be shared with law enforcement. The deadline to submit the Census is September 30, 2020 but enumerators have already started going through the community knocking on doors. There was an enumerator on Funderburg Drive a week ago. We are trying to make sure that we have a high response rate so that we can obtain much needed funding. As of September 6, 2020, the response rate for the State of Georgia is 60.6%, Jasper County is 60.2%, and Monticello is 57.6%. Idaho is in the number one position as far as responses for the census update with a 98.2 response rate. Please continue to push the Census.

City of Monticello
123 West Washington Street
Post Office Box 269
Monticello, GA 31064

Phone 706-468-6062

FAX 706-468-1041

Cares Funding – The City of Monticello received \$42,700 in Phase I. Staff pulled invoices for the items that are listed for Cares Funding due to the COVID-19 pandemic and we were able to submit \$21,683.84 of expenses by September 1, 2020. These expenses will be reimbursed to the City of Monticello. These were expenses that were not part of our budget process.

Surplus Equipment – The bid notice for surplus equipment was advertised in the September 3, 2020 newspaper. The sealed bids will be accepted on September 4, 2020 until noon on September 30, 2020. At that time, we will close out the bidding process and open the bids at 2:00 p.m. at City Hall. Any company or individual that has an interest in the items listed in the newspaper as surplus can contact the City Clerk. To adhere to social distancing guidelines, you can set up an appointment to view the items before submitting bids.

Helping Hands Ministries – Helping Hands Ministries had a ribbon cutting on August 21, 2020, at 426 Funderburg Drive. Their goal was to provide 100 boxes for the grand opening. The items distributed are much needed items that were hard to locate in some stores due to COVID-19. The next giveaway is September 26, 2020. The Sheriff Department was notified after the ribbon cutting because someone broke into the building and stole some of the items they had for distribution.

Wellness Grant –As part of the Wellness Grant initiative, on August 8, 2020, the City of Monticello provided a healthy lunch to its employees. Subway box lunches to go were provided to the employees. The employees were appreciative of the lunch.

Tree Limbs Across the City – The City Manager provided a presentation of photos showing various tree limb issues around the City. The tree limb ordinance was sent out with the utility bills. The Street employees have a stick on their truck that assist them with measuring the length of the limbs. There is also a fifty-pound weight requirement in the ordinance. There are only four employees in the Street Department, and we do not have the equipment to address this issue. When they go out to a job, they are utilizing their hands and pitch forks. In addition, the provider for our sanitation services is behind schedule on pickups.

9. Update on Beautify Monticello - Mayor Pro Tem Harrell stated that letters were sent out at the beginning of August to all the people that were interested in helping with the trash pickup in the City of Monticello. The letters were sent out to all the groups again and everyone I have spoken to say they are still on board with the project.

City of Monticello
123 West Washington Street
Post Office Box 269
Monticello, GA 31064

Phone 706-468-6062

FAX 706-468-1041

We are trying to get it started by late October if the Governor has not extended his executive order. The Beautify Monticello project is conducted outside and if we can rely on social distancing guidelines, I hope we can go ahead with the project. I want to be able to address the code enforcement issue because it has been a plague to the City of Monticello.

10. Comments by the Governing Body

Mayor Standifer –Budget Meeting is on September 17, 2020. We will discuss tree trimmings, number of injury cases in the street department, and options such as contractors. The Council Retreat is on September 26, 2020. In reference to Mr. Joe K. Davis, he is a great man and devoted community leader. COVID-19 is serious so take proper precautions.

Mayor Pro Tem Harrell – I have a webinar on urban design tomorrow and another webinar scheduled in late September on conflict resolution. I am looking forward to participating in them.

Councilmember Wease – County Commissioner Carl Pennamon will be missed.

Councilmember Miller – I am very happy the City Council is going to renamed Blue Ruin Street to Joe K. Davis Street.

Councilmember Murphy – no comments

Councilmember Thurman -no comments

11. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

City of Monticello
123 West Washington Street
Post Office Box 269
Monticello, GA 31064

Phone 706-468-6062

FAX 706-468-1041