

City of Santa Claus, GA

Council Meeting, January 21, 2020

On January 21, 2020, the Santa Claus, GA, City Council held the regular monthly meeting. Present were Eddie Wright, Elaine Wright, Vince Meadows, new mayor Amy Lawler, new council member, Donita Bowen, Councilmen Tad Bryant and Monte Powell and Sue Grisham.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Amy Lawler who then swore in Councilwoman Donita Bowen to begin her 4-year term at Post# 4 replacing Tim Horton. The minutes of the November 19, 2019, meeting were read. Tad made a motion second by Monte to accept minutes and passed unanimously to accept minutes as read. There was no December, 2019, meeting due to the busy Christmas schedule.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Amy announced that, after lengthy discussion, Eddie Wright has agreed to be the City Manager with an annual salary of \$1.00. Eddie will assist the council and her in projects within the city. Tad made a motion second by Monte for Eddie Wright to be the City Manager and assist council when requested. Amy suggested and council agreed that Tad will replace Tim Horton as Mayor Protem with Donita making a motion second by Monte with all in favor.

Amy stated that most city council members have wards to represent but, Santa Claus does not. Due to the lack of wards, Amy appointed specific areas of the city for each council member to oversee with Eddie's assistance as needed. Tad was appointed "The Gardens", Monte the Park, Donita the Community Center and Amy will cover the roads and roadways until a new council member is appointed to fill her seat. She stated that Raider Kennedy has not responded to calls to inquire on a price for the city street signs repairs which Vince confirmed. Vince gave Amy Raider's phone number: 912-585-2686 Various projects throughout the city were discussed.

Amy stated that, due to 28 years in the military, she is orderly, has an agenda, and tries to follow thru with jobs until they are completed. She said that she is working on getting keys to all council that they will need. The keys will be cataloged and each one will be signed for by the council as they pick them up as each one will be accountable for their keys.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Amy informed council that she has been in contact with Jason Hall, Lyons City Manager, several times concerning the fire protection of the City of Santa Claus by the Lyons Fire Department. She stated Jason has quoted \$600.00 for each fire call from us but she pointed out to him that the fee in the past has been \$250.00 per fire call. She added that Jason informed her that there was a call on 1/10/20 at 12:35 A.M. at the Lewis Pond House on Dasher ST and Salem ST which we did not know. Amy stated further that she is meeting with the city of Lyons the following week to discuss the fire fees further. If no solution can be met at that time, representatives of Lyons will come to a council meeting for further discussion. The proposed fee from Jason is \$2.00 per household in Santa Claus to be added to the water bills monthly. Amy added that businesses fees would \$10.00 per month.

Amy stated property tax notices will be mailed out in the next few days. A computer glitch is blamed for the delayed mailing of them.

Everyone agreed all of the Christmas celebrations in the city were great. It is a community effort.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Amy informed council that she will be going to a free three day seminar for newly elected officials in Tifton in February and that there is a seminar at UGA in Athens on March 4 thru 6 for cities of populations less than 1,000.

A fourth council seat needs to be appointed to fill the vacancy of Amy's Post 4 when she became mayor. Amy asked council for suggestions on a citizen to fill this seat followed by discussion.

Amy read all banking account balances of the city as of 12/31/19. She passed out a copy of the 2020 Proposed Budget to all that were present. Amy started the explanation of the proposed budget with the SPLOST account funds. She stated that the SPLOST money must be used on city projects or money could be lost by the city. Santa Claus has been receiving about \$46,000.00 per year from SPLOST but, due to the county courthouse project portion from Santa Claus of about \$16,000.00, 2020 will be about \$30,000.00. Council discussed projects to come from the SPLOST account. Amy stated there will be 6 security cameras installed at the City Hall and a new credit card machine for \$1,100.00. Also under "Capital Expenditures" walk areas preservations, improvements can be made in various accessible walking locations.

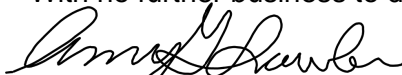
Amy read the balances of cash available in the General and LOST city accounts which totals approximately \$74,000.00. Total monies to be received by the city in 2020 is approximately \$90,300.00. Items to include, the addition of a city web site being created, were projected in the operating budget. Tad made a motion second by Monte to create the web site with all agreeing. The contract with Republic Services is expiring and the amount for garbage pickup may change. Bids will be accepted for garbage pickup for the city. Tad made a motion second by Monte to accept bids for garbage pickup services with all agreeing. Water and sewage account is self-sustaining account, with current water and sewage rates paying for all amounts due for monitoring and the operation of the sewage pump. All rates will stay the same. Tad made a motion second by Monte to approve the proposed budget as presented, with all agreeing. Budget for 2020 passed.

The city limit signs need to be pressure washed and re-painted. Several street shoulders need repair.

Vince informed council that an 18-wheeler truck is parking on city property behind the storage units on the southwest end of the city. Need to place No Parking signs in the area.

Donita suggested the vacant city property on U.S. # 1 and Candy Cane ST be rented out around November and December for a Christmas tree sales stand and/or arts and crafts projects. Council discussed this and other ideas for future projects. Amy stated she recalled a city sponsored Easter party in the past and asked for thoughts on this and July 4th watermelon cutting party adding there is a new generation in the city and the city needs to be catering to them, so more will get involved.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

  
Amy Lawler, Mayor