

City of Santa Claus, Georgia

Regular Monthly Council Meeting March 21, 2023

The regular meeting of the Santa Claus City Council was held March 21, 2023. Present were Mayor Donita Bowen, Councilmembers Monte Powell, Brenda Sells, and Renee Wright, Sue Grisham, Vince Meadows, Eddie and Elaine Wright and Chris Rustin. David Evans was working out of town. The meeting began with the group reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Minutes of February 21, 2023, meeting were read. Renee made a motion second by Monte to accept the minutes as read. Council voted unanimously to accept.

Old Business: The financial reports were reviewed by the Council.

The Garden: Donita inquired with Brenda about the eyeglasses cleaner and Brenda stated she will get a sample for council to see with the same emblem as the t-shirts. . **The Park:** Monte stated there are squirrels in the attic of the rest room at the Pavilion. Ways to remove them were discussed.

Community Center: Renee stated there are no issues at the building. **Roads:** David had no issues to report with the streets. Donita said she will inquire with the City of Lyons on the handicap rails needed for the restrooms at the Gift Shop.

Donita, Brenda, and Renee reported the GMA training classes for new city officers with the University of GA Center for Continuing Ed in Athens on March 1, through March 3, 2023 were informative. David did not attend as scheduled as he had covid. They learned the raises for mayor and council voted on at the January meeting were not legal at this time so Donita recanted that motion.

Vince stated he suggests the city check with an attorney on the legalities of the city keeping the Dollar General outside cleared of brush & passing the cost to the store. Donita agreed to contact an attorney. At this time, Council discussed changing city attorney agreeing to inquire if Tom Peterson would represent the city. Brenda made a motion second by Renee to change city attorney to Tom Peterson with a unanimous vote in favor. Donita will present the ongoing problem at the Dollar General to the attorney. Donita added that she has contacted the deputy sheriff concerning the damaged STOP sign on Salem ST again.

The fire protection contract between the City of Lyons and the City of Santa Claus is still pending due to Lyons researching the agreement. The insulation has been installed in the attic at City Hall. GMA's Resolution Pledging to Practice and Promote Civility in the City of Santa Claus has been signed by all Council. Donita will email it back to GMA. Local Maintenance Improvement Grant (LMIG) deposit was made to the city on January 31, 2023.

Sue was asked and she agreed to mail out a letter to all water users stating the water bill will increase by 30% and the garbage pickup will increase by \$3.00 per user on May 1, 2023. The finances of the city accounts were discussed. Hopefully the increases will boost the systems as needed.

February 21, 2023, -page 2- Eddie stated he has contacted someone to do a repair to help alleviate the vast sewer pump station charge from Lyons but no one has come out yet. Too, he said the ditches will be cleaned out as soon as Kyle Wiggins gets a break in his schedule. The dirt from the ditches will be stored at the city lot on Noel until the work at the park is ready to use it. Also, the surveyor has surveyed the property donated to the city by Russ Bell at the Park and installed pins for the lines. The surveyor was in our area and charged only \$100.00 for his service.

Donita stated she is working on a draft of the Zoning Ordinance for residence as there has been an inquiry as to rules on building a house in the city. She recommends the council has a workshop to assist in this. Too, Council still needs to be sure all residences have the house number on them for 911 safety.

Council agreed to transfer the ARPA funds to the Water & Sewage account and close that account. Donita suggested the LOST account funds be transferred to the General account making the LOST funds deposit directly into the General account and close the LOST account notifying the state of this . Too, she suggested the LMIG grant funds just received be transferred into a new "Roads" account and adding a transfer to the account of 10% matching funds at this time of \$381.37. Brenda made a motion second by Monte to transfer the funds and close the accounts as Donita suggested and open a "Roads" account. Council voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

In past years, water and sewer users have been given 90 days to pay a past due account before service is discontinued. Brenda made a motion second Monte to change this policy to allow only 10-15 days before service is discontinued. Council agreed unanimously to allow 15 days for a past due balance.

The animal control ordinance was discussed with Donita stating she has talked with the pet owner.

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

Respectfully Submitted, Sue Grisham

Donita Bowen, Mayor 