

City of Santa Claus, Georgia  
Regular Monthly Council Meeting

January 16, 2024

The regular meeting of the Santa Claus City Council was held January 16, 2024. Present were Mayor Donita Bowen, Councilmembers Renee Wright, Monte Powell, and Brenda Sells, Sue Grisham, Vince Meadows, Chris Rustin, and Eddie and Elaine Wright. There was no meeting in December due to the busy Christmas schedule. The meeting began with the group reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Minutes of November 21, 2023, meetings were read. Renee made a motion second by Monte to accept the minutes as read.

**Old Business:** The financial reports were reviewed by the Council. Council agreed that all the Christmas activities and celebrations were a great success. Weather was perfect for the Christmas Eve street lighting. Gardens: No word from T-Lake concerning the Gardens lights and repair of them. Park: Monte stated there are no issues at the Park. Community Center: Due to the slow schedule at this time, Renee agreed to turn off the ice machine and stay updated on the dates to turn it on. Roads: Darrel Corley has been working on a sewer line and is in the process of patching the area on Reindeer ST.

Donita asked Council to recommend ways to use the Safety Grant such as door mats at the City Hall and/or Gift Shop or any safety issues for the safety of the citizens. CGI banner designs need to be decided on as there are several banners on December DR torn up from years of wear. Donita stated that, due to family obligations, Councilman David Evans did not seek a second term and his seat will require Council appointing a new council member. She added that if there is a new city official in 2024, they are required to attend a training session after taking office either February 28 thru March 1 in Athens or March 20 thru March 22 in Tifton both to be conducted by GMA. She informed the Council that she is working on the LMIC grant request to be submitted no later than February 1, 2024. This will be used to resurface a section of Noel ST. Grant will cover 90% of the costs and the city responsible for the remaining 10%.

The agreement with the City of Lyons to cover fire protection at a rate of \$4.00 per month per household and is passed on to the resident. Due to vacancies at rentals, Sue will mail a notice to the property owners of their obligation to pay the fire protection monthly for each unit. Payment has already been received on the January fees. The credit card machine at the Gift Shop is not working properly for transactions and Vince agreed to assist Donita in this. Donita stated she has mailed the U.S. Census for the city.

**New Business:** The Christmas decorations need to be taken down. Storage is needed. Eddie drew up plans and will contact a contractor to build a new building for the storage to be erected beside the Noel ST storage lot. Council reviewed the sketch and discussed this. Brenda made a motion second by Renee to build a building for storage. Council agreed unanimously.

**January 16, 2024 meeting -page 2-** Donita stated she and Brenda met with Toombs County Elections Registrar Carrie Alligood earlier in the month. They received a lot of necessary information from Carrie. Also, there are several upcoming required meetings for the Toombs County Comprehensive Plan Update 2024 in accordance with the Georgia law. This includes Toombs County, Vidalia, Lyons, and Santa Claus. There will be 5 meetings of the committee over the next several months lasting about 1.5 hours. Council is requested to submit any ideas for the betterment of our city or the county. The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission has proposed a fee of \$5,000.00 to provide technical assistance in the new joint comprehensive plan. Fees will be divided among the county and cities involved. Meetings are open to everyone.

The Water and Sewage System account was discussed. Due to the increase in all costs to operate the systems, Council voted for a 50% increase for water and sewage charges per month for all users. This will not increase the garbage pickup or fire protection fees. Hopefully, the increase will cover the expenses for the system.

A work shop was held to discuss the 2024 budget for the city. Copies of the Proposed 2024 Budget was given to the Council for review. This was discussed. A motion was made by Brenda, second by Monte. Council voted unanimously to accept the budget as presented. A public notice will be printed in The Advance, the local newspaper, of the budget being available upon request at City Hall during regular business hours.

Donita stated she will inquire on the C.D. with Altamaha Bank as it is maturing in the near future. Eddie gave Donita information needed to condemn the old Tea Room building at U.S.# 1 and Reindeer ST owned by Cliff Duerfeldt as it is a safety hazard. Council discussed this. Chris stated the speed bump on Dancer ST in front of her house needs repair. Sue will ask Luis Nino to check on it.

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

Respectfully Submitted, Sue Grisham



Donita Bowen, Mayor



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