

February 12, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor LaWanda Tatum called the regular meeting of the Lawrenceville Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. on February 12, 2025. This meeting was postponed from February 11th to February 12th due to inclement weather on February 11, 2025.

ROLL CALL

Roll was called. Present: Council Members H. B. Brockwell, Jr., Jeanette Grimes, Dora Hardy, Robert F. Pecht, III, Alice Talbert, Teya Whitehead and Anne Williams.

Absent: Town Attorney, W. C. Outten, Jr.

Also present: Town Manager, Randy Lynch, Town Clerk, Wanda Johnson, Special Projects Coordinator, Kimberly Martin, Assistant Police Chief, Demetrie Coles, Debbie Burkett, Chris Stephenson, Michael Tatum, Leonard Rose, Todd Fleming and citizens.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Tatum led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion by Mr. Brockwell, seconded by Mrs. Talbert and carried by all ayes, Town Council voted to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on January 14, 2025, as received, suspend the reading and file.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion by Mr. Brockwell, seconded by Mrs. Talbert and carried by all ayes, Town Council voted to approve the agenda as presented.

RECOGNITION OF CITIZENS

DEBBIE BURKETT – REMOTE AREA MEDICAL

Mrs. Burkett shared that RAM (Remote Area Medical) will be held the weekend of June 21 & 22, 2025, at Greenville County High School. She gave an overview of all medical, vision and dental services provided, free of charge. She invited everyone to attend and/or sign up to volunteer. Mrs. Burkett commented that volunteering at the event would be “the best exhaustion you will ever have.” She also asked for continued support from the town.

RAM CONTRIBUTION REQUEST

On motion by Mr. Pecht, seconded by Mr. Brockwell and carried by all ayes, Town Council voted to contribute \$2,000.00 to the 2025 Southside RAM event.

CHRIS STEPHENSON – STREET CLOSURE REQUEST

Mr. Stephenson provided information on the Saint Paul’s Legacy Weekend events planned for the weekend of April 4-6, 2025. Planned events include a lecture series, an alumni basketball game, a community groove-a-thon and a memorial service; all to celebrate the legacy of James Solomon Russell. On behalf of the SPC4LIFE/Saint Paul’s Leadership Institute, Mr. Stephenson

requested that the Town approve a request to close Bank Street for the event. Mr. Lynch advised that Mr. Stephenson would need to submit an application and fee for the closure request prior to the Town submitting an application to VDOT. On motion by Mr. Pecht, seconded by Mr. Brockwell and carried by all ayes, Town Council voted to approve the closure of Bank Street on April 5, 2025, and support the application to be made to VDOT.

LEONARD ROSE

Mr. Rose talked about getting his REAL ID driver's license, the Channel 12 Act of Kindness Award and about picking up trash and cans in town. Mayor Tatum thanked Mr. Rose for helping to keep the town beautiful.

LAWRENCEVILLE EDA

Mr. Brockwell reported that the EDA secretary/treasurer will be moving at the end of the month. The EDA will now have three positions to be filled. The EDA will make recommendations to Town Council for appointments to fill the positions.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Tatum reported she knows of a young lady interested in working with the community garden and the Lawrenceville Welcome sign. Mayor Tatum will meet with her to go over her plans. Mayor Tatum attended the King Day Celebration and brought greetings on behalf of the Town. Mayor Tatum and Ms. Whitehead continue to discuss an event regarding Justin's Heart. Mayor Tatum spoke to someone regarding making a Lawrenceville video on a voluntary basis. She spoke on behalf of VCU Massey Cancer Center on colorectal cancer. She and her husband were the first colorectal champions for Brunswick County. She will be at Virginia State on March 1, 2025, to make a presentation. The health and wellness of our town is important to her. Mayor Tatum recognized a visitor in the audience. Mr. Todd Fleming then addressed Council.

TODD FLEMING

Mr. Fleming introduced himself and stated he is interested in the Police Chief position that is open to be filled. He said he has over thirty-five years of law enforcement experience at the local, state and federal levels. For the last twenty years he has been with the ATF and now works out of the Richmond office. He is eligible to retire from that position and is interested in the Lawrenceville police chief position.

REPORT OF TOWN ATTORNEY

There was no report.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

CONSIDERATION OF ACCOUNTS

Mrs. Johnson reported the bills total \$126,543.87. On a motion by Mr. Pecht, seconded by Mr. Brockwell and carried by all ayes, Town Council voted to pay the bills in the amount of \$126,543.87 and post to the proper accounts.

REPORT OF TOWN MANAGER WATER TANK REPAIR UPDATE

The ground storage tank on Planters Road passed the required testing and is back in service. The Mayfield tank repairs and painting have been completed. Hopefully, that tank will be back online by the end of next week.

BABS REQUEST FOR FUNDING FY 2026

Blackstone Area Bus System has submitted a request for funding. Mr. Pecht advised this is already in the current budget. On motion by Mr. Pecht, seconded by Mr. Brockwell and carried by all ayes, Town Council voted to approve funding for BABS in the amount of \$3,700.00 for FY 2025-2026.

AUTHORIZATION FOR DOMINION POWER FOR POLE MOUNTS

There is an authorization in the packet for an evaluation of non-traditional attachments to install pole mounts on Dominion poles. On motion by Mr. Brockwell, seconded by Mr. Pecht and carried by all ayes, Town Council voted to authorize the Town Manager to execute this authorization document.

PARK STREET GRANT UPDATE

Mr. Lynch reported on the approval of CDBG project applications to include Park Street, Phase 2, in the amount of \$46,000 and the approval of Park Street Phase 1, in the amount of \$1,750,000.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND FOIA TRAINING

Mr. Lynch advised that emails were sent out Monday to all Council members with attached links for training information. There was a problem with the Gmail accounts, and they were sent out again today. Please check your email for this training information.

ELECTRONIC SIGN

Ms. Williams expressed continued concerns about training on the electronic signs. Mr. Lynch said they are currently assigned as police department assets. Ms. Williams would like clarification on the signs.

SOUTHERN STATES BUILDING

Ms. Williams commented that the lease on the Southern States building expired in October. She asked what the status of the cleanup of the building is, environmental or trash. She further stated it needs to be advertised for lease or sale. She said we need a stronger lease agreement in the future. Mr. Lynch advised he discussed this with Mr. Outten, and we will contact the former lease tenant to inquire their intentions for cleanup.

VCU MASSEY CANCER CENTER BUILDING

Ms. Williams asked about the status of the Cancer Center building as that lease has expired. Mr. Lynch said we will look for recommendations from the Lawrenceville EDA regarding that building.

PARKING

Ms. Williams asked if there will be a public hearing to address municipal parking behind the library and Peebles building. Mr. Lynch commented this needs direction from the Town Development committee.

DECAYING BUILDINGS

Ms. Williams commented on decaying buildings on Main Street and asked what, if any, funding we have applied for to address these buildings. The buildings are owned by others, not the Town. Mr. Lynch said we have looked into funding avenues but they have not been fruitful at this time.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr. Pecht reported the financial statement in the packet. We are running a bit ahead of the budget and last year at this time. We will soon be in the budgeting process for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. The finance committee will put a draft budget together to present at the April meeting for a public hearing in May. The budget will then be adopted in June. He said we are fortunate to have Mrs. Johnson and staff to have timely details presented in a cash basis report. He asked council to take time to go through the statement.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

The January fire report is in the add packet. All the calls were out of town. The fire department responded to 20 calls in January. Of the 20, 0 were in the town limits and 20 were outside the town limits. Also, 14 were in the LVFD First Due area, with 6 being mutual aid to other agencies. Approximately 69.5 man hours were expended.

PERSONNEL

Mr. Brockwell reviewed an outline for proposals for employee appreciation day or week suggestions. He would like these proposals included in the next budget. He would like to include \$25 gift cards in this year's budget and \$50 gift cards in next year's budget. He made this in the form of a motion. There was no second. The motion died for lack of a second. Mrs. Talbert said she thought it should wait for next year's budget. Mr. Brockwell, the personnel committee chair, requested that a cost estimate be requested for a spreadsheet in the accounting system. Right now we do not participate in LEO, we need to get information on that. The Police committee makes recommendations to Personnel and Council. He shared Draft 12 on town job vacancies. He also discussed upcoming job fairs. Mr. Brockwell asked Mayor Tatum to consider taking him off the Personnel committee and appoint someone else. Mayor Tatum said she is considering some committee changes.

POLICE

Ms. Hardy stated the monthly report is in the packet. Ms. Hardy reported that she, Mr. Lynch and Mrs. Johnson met with VRS regarding a LEO hazardous duty cost study. The letter has been submitted to request the study and the funds are already allocated in the budget for the cost of the study. The Police committee met regarding the police chief and police officer openings and applications. They agreed to re-advertise the open positions. At this time, the Police committee recommends that our current Assistant Chief Coles be named Interim Police Chief. There was discussion. There are only two filled positions in the department currently. On motion by Ms.

Hardy, seconded by Mr. Pecht and carried, Demetrius Coles was appointed Interim Police Chief until a Police Chief is hired. Mrs. Talbert was opposed.

Mrs. Williams addressed Interim Chief Coles regarding the commercial vehicles parking in neighborhoods. She said this violates parking and noise ordinances and is a public health and safety problem. Interim Chief Coles said he wants to be fair. He does not want to punish people when there is no solution to offer them to park commercial vehicles elsewhere. The Town does not own vacant lots to establish as parking lots for commercial vehicles. There was additional discussion regarding parking.

PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

Mr. Brockwell said when we do have a full police force and are able to begin enforcement of ordinances, the Town will incur costs. When we begin enforcing all our codes the Town will inherit a lot of buildings that will require a great deal of money to renovate or tear down. Regarding property and equipment, he said many people do not understand the capital funding that becomes available. An example is the new police trucks were from a capital funding project, not local funding.

STREETS, LIGHTS & CEMETERY

Mrs. Talbert asked if anyone attended the VDOT Highway 58 meeting. Mr. Pecht reported that he attended. It was about entering and leaving the Food Lion area. It is proposed that Cattail will be closed off at 58. Comments may be made online through February 14, 2025.

TOWN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Brockwell commented that the project list is in the packet. He asked everyone to please review projects on the list. This is how the Town seeks project funding sources. There are three full pages of lists including the Town and County.

WATER/WASTEWATER

Information was discussed earlier in the meeting. He said we have completed projects that were expected to take care of problems but did not. He said we must rely on VDH and DEQ for guidance. The Alberta project costs keep going up. We are applying for project funding. We are working to get operator positions filled.

HOUSING CODE ENFORCEMENT

There was no report. Mr. Brockwell requested that a meeting be scheduled with the building code official, the Town Development Chair and the Housing Code Enforcement Chair.

PARKS/RECREATION

Mrs. Talbert commented that the Peebles Park decorations looked neat. Mr. Brockwell commented he learned the triangle area with pecan trees at High Street is called Pecan Park.

WELLNESS

Ms. Whitehead provided a short video on Black History Moments in the Town of Lawrenceville.

FARMER'S MARKET

Ms. Whitehead and Mayor Tatum are working with Justin's Heart to plan a community event. Mr. Pecht suggested having a farmer's market on Bank Street.

LAWRENCEVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION

There was no report.

CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no additional announcements.

NEW BUSINESS

REVIVE TRAINING

Ms. Grimes offered to conduct REVIVE training for Town Council. She is certified in this training. The RAPID REVIVE training takes less than 30 minutes and is for opioid overdose reversal.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Tatum adjourned the meeting.

LaWanda Tatum, Mayor
Wanda Johnson, Clerk