

December 13, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Scott Martin called the regular meeting of the Lawrenceville Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. on December 13, 2022.

ROLL CALL

Roll was called. Present: Mayor Scott Martin; Council Members H. B. Brockwell, Jr., Dora Hardy, Robert F. Pecht, III, Nakai Peterson, Alice Talbert, Teya Whitehead and Anne Williams.

Also present: Town Attorney, W. C. Outten, Jr., Town Manager, Everette Gibson, Town Clerk, Wanda Johnson, Special Projects Coordinator, Kimberly Martin, Police Chief, John Stith, Officer Chad Clary, Justin Thomas, Alfreda Reynolds, LaWanda Tatum, Beverly Ambs, Leonard Rose, citizens and the press.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Police Chief John Stith led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion by Mr. Pecht, seconded by Mrs. Talbert and carried by all ayes, Town Council voted to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on November 15, 2022, as received, suspend the reading and file.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

RECOGNITION OF CITIZENS

LEONARD ROSE

Leonard Rose spoke about the true meaning of Christmas; family, friends and to celebrate Jesus every day. He commented that a leader recently passed away from cancer and that everyone should get a checkup every year. He also reported he found a credit card and turned it in to the town office.

ANNE WILLIAMS

Ms. Williams, speaking as a citizen, commented that all that glitters is not gold. She said, as a Town, we look at things and make decisions we think are in the best interest of the Town, but maybe are not. As we spend money on special events, we should think about things, such as the caboose, that could help bring tourism. She also commented that St. Andrew's Church is over three hundred years old and is beginning to die out. She said we should help St. Andrew's Church. She commented about the property at 411 Windsor Avenue, the corner at Windsor and High Street, and concerns about the zoning there regarding two separate apartments. She thanked everyone for their hard work and Mayor Martin for all of the hard work he has done. Ms. Williams said we need to stand together as a community in 2023 to make our town what it can be. Mr. Martin commented he has discussed the caboose and the Windsor Avenue house with Mr. Gibson.

LAWRENCEVILLE EDA

Mr. Gibson and Mrs. Martin attended the meeting. A copy of the minutes is in the packet. There are continuing problems at the VCU building. Mr. Gibson commented that Mr. Veliky will be meeting with representatives from VCU and the owner of the adjacent building. Mr. Martin thanked Christine Gerg, EDA Secretary/Treasurer for the outstanding job she is doing.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Martin commented the Tree Lighting went well. He thanked Ms. Reynolds for singing. He thanked everyone for attending. The Christmas Parade was one of the best in a long time. He was honored and humbled to be the Grand Marshall. He thanked Mrs. Martin for all of the things she has done and the hard work and preparation that went into it. The Santa Breakfast had a great turnout. Alex Twum, art teacher, did sketches for the children and added a lot to it. The LVFD banquet was very nice. Mayor Martin attended the Employee Luncheon catered by Gary Peterson. He thanked the Town employees, office staff, public works, fire department, police, council, town citizens for all the trust, confidence and everything done for him. He has really enjoyed serving as Mayor in the Town he lives in and grew up in. He followed in the footsteps of such people as Doug Pond, Keith Clarke, Norborne Doyle and his father as well. He plans to continue to support the Town. We have a great team and we all work together. He thanked everyone for everything they do and continue to do. 2023 looks very positive.

REPORT OF TOWN ATTORNEY

Mr. Outten advised the deed has been prepared for the gracious Pecht family gift to the Town.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

CONSIDERATION OF ACCOUNTS

Mrs. Johnson reported the bills total \$230,125.92. On a motion by Ms. Hardy, seconded by Mrs. Talbert and carried by all ayes, Town Council voted to pay the bills in the amount of \$230,125.92 and post to the proper accounts.

REPORT OF TOWN MANAGER

PEEBLES AND SOUTHERN STATES PROJECTS

Peebles - Mr. Gibson reported that the Historic Preservation Certification Application Part 1 was approved by the Department of Historic Resources and the National Park Service. Mr. Staats is currently working on Part 2 of the application. Southern States - BDX Performance LLC should have their equipment moved into the building very soon. The utilities will be switched over on January 1, 2023.

DHCD EMAIL PEBBLES/SOUTHERN STATES LIENS

Mr. Gibson reported that he received a letter today at 5:15 p.m. by email from DHCD regarding the liens on the Peebles and Southern States properties. He shared a copy for Council to review. The letter recaps the events and requirements since 2010. The letter indicates that the Town will pay DHCD \$200,000. In exchange for that payment, DHCD will release its lien on the Peebles building, and will reduce its lien on the Southern States building to \$125,000. The payment is due by December 31, 2022, in order to have DHCD release the lien on the Peebles building. Following discussion, Town Council voted to pay DHCD \$200,000. On motion by Mr. Pecht, seconded by Mr. Brockwell and carried by all ayes, Town Council voted to approve a payment of \$200,000 to DHCD to fulfill the Town's obligation to DHCD and in exchange for DHCD releasing the lien on the Peebles building and reducing the lien on the Southern States building to \$125,000. Motion: Mr. Pecht. Second: Mr. Brockwell. Roll call vote: Mr. Brockwell, aye; Ms. Hardy, aye; Mr. Pecht, aye; Ms. Peterson, aye; Mrs. Talbert, aye; Ms. Whitehead, aye; Ms. Williams, aye.

SOUTHERN STATES BUILDING – CDSI PROPOSAL

Chris Suber, President of CDSI, in a letter dated October 6, 2022, requested first right of refusal on the Southern States building at the end of the current two year lease on that building. Mr. Suber offered a \$1,000 deposit toward the purchase amount of \$200,000. He also offered a contribution of \$25,000 toward the future development of the Town Park. On motion by Mr. Pecht, seconded by Ms. Hardy and carried by all ayes, Town Council voted to approve the request made by Chris Suber and approve first right of refusal on the Southern States building at the end of the current two year lease provided a non-refundable deposit of \$1,000 is made toward the purchase amount of \$200,000 and a \$25,000 contribution toward the future Town Park.

EXISTING CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

Mr. Gibson shared a detailed report on Christmas decorations as provided by Randy Lynch. It contains information on the condition of the existing decorations and recommendations and cost estimates for possible new decorations. This is provided for information only at this time.

EXTENSION OF TAX DUE DATE

Mr. Gibson asked if Council would like to extend the Town Tax Due Date to February 10, 2023. The County has extended the County Tax Due Date until February 10, 2023. Mr. Pecht said he thinks it would be warranted this year due to the values on used cars went up and also the PPTRA credit went down. On motion by Ms. Hardy, seconded by Ms. Peterson and carried by all ayes, Town Council voted to extend the Town Tax deadline to February 10, 2023, for Town 2022 real estate and personal property taxes, with no penalty and interest. A notice will be sent out on the phone system tomorrow and a notice will be sent to the newspaper.

FESTIVE HOLIDAY EVENTS

Mrs. Martin shared a PowerPoint presentation of the holiday events. There were pictures from the storefront decorations, tree lighting, Christmas parade and employee luncheon.

Mr. Gibson wished the Mayor, Council and everyone a Happy Holiday. He commented how much he enjoyed serving with Mayor Martin.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr. Pecht reported a finance committee meeting will be scheduled. He would also like to meet to update the financial statement to separate and reflect the ARPA funds and purchases.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

The fire department responded to 14 calls in November. Of the 14, 3 were in the town limits and 11 were outside the town limits. Also, 11 were in the LVFD First Due area, with 3 being mutual aid to other agencies. Approximately 29 man hours were expended. The LVFD held its annual Christmas Banquet and Dance on December 3, 2022.

SLATE OF OFFICERS

The LVFD slate of officers for 2023 – 2024: Fire Chief - Justin Thomas, Deputy Chief – Mike Thomas, Assistant Chief – Joel Dodson, Captain – Dalton Arthur, 1st Lieutenant – Brandon Jones, 2nd Lieutenant – Allison Thomas, Safety Officer – Tyler Kea, President – James Wesson, Vice President – Bob Williams, Secretary – Brandon Jones. On motion by Mr. Pecht, seconded by Mrs. Talbert and carried by all ayes, Town Council voted to approve the slate of officers as presented.

PERSONNEL

Mr. Brockwell reported on the chart in the packet. The senior maintenance technician will be one of the next to be filled. Water and wastewater operators are still needed.

POLICE

The police report is in the packet. Chief Stith reported that Officer Stith will graduate from the academy tomorrow. Chief Stith followed up on a recent report to Council for the need for security measures for the Town Office to protect our employees. Today a private citizen walked behind the counter into the office space and got in an individual's personal space. Chief Stith has requested quotes to secure that area and will share those quotes when received. Chief Stith commented that for our employees, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Lewis, Mrs. Washburn, Mrs. Martin, Mr. Gibson and the Mayor, to be exposed is unacceptable.

PROPERTY & EQUIPMENT

A list of insured vehicles and coverage with VRSA is provided on the table tonight.

STREETS, LIGHTS & CEMETERY

Mr. Gibson reported that the cemetery was treated for red fire ants after several complaints were received. Mrs. Talbert commented that the streets have been swept.

TOWN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Brockwell asked everyone to review the reports in the packet to see the status of grants.

WATER/WASTEWATER

Mr. Brockwell reported that the committee will look at grants further.

HOUSING CODE ENFORCEMENT

Mr. Gibson reported that Mr. Veliky assists with enforcement recommendations. Mr. Outten reviews any enforcement correspondence before it is sent out. Mr. Veliky will also look at the old Dollar General/theater building.

PARKS/RECREATION

There was no report.

WELLNESS

Ms. Whitehead shared a short video providing information on services provided by the VCU Massey Cancer Center.

FARMER'S MARKET

There was no report.

LAWRENCEVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION

There was no report.

COMMENTS

Mr. Pecht thanked Mr. Martin for his outstanding service as Mayor. He commented he has never seen any Mayor put in any more effort in this job.

Mr. Martin commented how much the Pecht family is appreciated for all of their years of service.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before Council, a motion was made by Ms. Talbert, seconded by Ms. Hardy and carried by all ayes to adjourn the meeting.

Scott E. Martin, Mayor

Wanda Johnson, Clerk