CITY OF OGLETHORPE

OGLETHORPE CITY HALL

115 CHATHAM STREET

COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

JANUARY 25, 2024 – 6:00PM

Call to order: Mayor Daniels 6:00PM

**\* River Valley Regional Commission – Grant, Allison, and Naomi to speak in regards to administration of CDBG grant.**

Jim Livingston – Executive Director – I have Tracey and Naomi, a new employee with us. We advised when asked about administering this grant that we would need to get staffed in order to do that. Tracy Highway is our director of planning and govt services. She is Allison and Grants boss lady. Mayor one thing I want talk about is what we do at the Regional Commission. I appreciate you coming to our meeting virtually, yesterday to learn a little bit about that. We are over 16 counties and Macon County is one of them. We work for community development. One of the things we really work to do is bring federal dollars into our region and make sure that they are properly administered. We do a lot of this around infrastructure. This will be our first one around housing – CDBG project. We’ve had regular communication with the Dept of Community Affairs in regards to your project in particular and what has been going on. Making sure that we go through this properly. Federal Rules must be followed. That is extremely important. I do not want you as a city to be on the hook in case something does not get done right and the state asks for the money back. That would all have to come from you. They have done it before. I want to make sure that this is crystal clear here. The federal rules on how we do housing must be followed. I am confident that the grant application was done accurately and correctly. Your administrator for that knows what she is doing. We are happy to help the applicants move forward. One of the things we are going to be doing is getting some outside help with the technical expertise part. As a regional commission, one of the things we do is look out for what we need to bring into the community. The City of Oglethorpe is a member of the Regional Commission because you have dues. We are the lowest in the state for regional commission. We are trying to bring in other Federal Funding. To your housing project, if you would like us to take it on, we are ready to get started with this. We would need to reach out to the Dept of Community Affairs and then get an RFP out to get the technical expertise online. Naomi is going to have a team behind her to sort of help out to make sure her pieces are in place.

Naomi Masuoka – Hello. I am River Valley’s newest regional planner. I was an intern with them last semester before I graduated college with my English degree and so Jim was kind enough to let me become the newest staff member. I am fairly new to the housing side of things, but I am very excited to get into it. I do have a team behind me who will guide me and we will all be learning this together through this project. Specifically, I have Grant and Allison. Tracy and Jim, they have done this for many years and I am very excited that they will be training me in this. I’ve been looking at target areas already and we drove through your area before we got here today. I am really excited to be doing this for ya’ll and I want to say thank you for having me.

Jim Livingston – Tracy has done housing projects before. Rick has done housing projects before. This is not new stuff to us. We will make sure Naomi has everything she needs to do her job.

Mayor Daniels – So we say yes? What’s the process**?**

Jim Livingston – First we will notify DCA and let them tell us what steps they would want us to do next and make sure that we are all good. There is plenty left of this grant to get administered. We would use those leftovers to help pay for the work we do and to pay for the reviews necessary.

Mayor Daniels – So how do we go about getting the citizens who were already on the list taken care of? Then if someone new…

Jim Livingston – So anybody new that wants to get on the list would have to go through a new process. The people that are on the list, we will go through and get a handle on what’s been done and what’s not been done. Some work has been done. New units are on the ground. We are going to meet with the homeowners. CM Daniels – So you guys would meet with them? Jim Livingston – Yes, if you want us to do this, it would be our responsibility to meet with them. CM Harrison – I think the missing link previously was the communication so it’s imperative that everyone is totally clear on how things will happen, time frame, and all. Jim Livingston – Yes. We will follow what is in the application. That is your agreement with the state and we will follow that. We will do the best we can. We will have to make sure that you are working within budget. Naomi can get communication with DCA and we can start if you guys are good. CM Harrison – So you will just need our help with public forums and public hearings? Jim Livingston – Public Hearings is just a technical term, but it is not necessary. But we just need meetings. You guys know these people and we don’t so we would need your help there. Our contract is with you. We need your help with this communication.

CM Bradley – But they have experience working with CDBG on the other end. The infrastructure side of things. All the red tape that’s involved. The federal funds are scary and they have to followed to the letter.

Jim Livingston – This is not a public meeting today, but I will re-iterate this, we need to follow the federal rules.

Mayor Daniels – Thank you all for coming. We accept.

Jim Livingston – We will reach out to DCA tomorrow.

CM Harrison – We will need to have the official vote at the next council meeting to have it on record.

Jim Livingston – We will just advise DCA tomorrow that we do have the verbal acceptance and proceed from there.

**Department Head Reports:**

1. City Clerk, Melissa Jones – report emailed to council prior to meeting.
2. Police Dept – Cindy Kleckley (sends report to regular council meeting) / Interim Chief Finch - First thing is the Buck Creek Bypass that will start on the 29th of January and we have 2 flock cameras out there. They have to be moved and it will take $350.00 for each one (email was sent). I had an incident a week and half ago where we almost lost an officer. Someone came into town through Ideal and she was jumping in and out of the car. We were called for assistance. Ended up stopping her over at the CVS in Montezuma. The lady’s husband said they were from Dooly Co. He asked if he could just take her back home. She was put in the back of the car since there were safety locks so she couldn’t jump out anymore. The officer followed them on down the road and could see that she was beating on her husband as he drove. So they pulled him over again to make an arrest. The lady reached inside the pocket to take some pills. When the officer put the lady in the car, she noticed immediately as she was driving down the road that something was wrong. Her left side was freezing up and she didn’t have any movement when she got to the traffic light. Vision was blurred. She called on the radio and told first response what was going on. EMS shot her up with some loricane as well as the suspect. With that being said, we advised all of our officers what to do in a case like that. To make sure they have this in their car. We contacted the school system as well because people bring pills to school. They will be meeting with their leadership team and get them all trained up. I ordered gloves for all officers as well. We’ve advised them to not only keep them in their cars, but to also put them in their pockets. We stayed at the hospital all night and the only thing that saved her was the shot that was given to her by EMS. Please spread the word to not take ANYBODY’S pills. Another thing, we have a group from Taylor Co going around and stealing mail and some was in Oglethorpe. So please let us know if you (the citizen’s) are missing any mail. I also want to talk to you about the flock cameras. (handouts given out) A car was picked up on our flock cameras. They stole about $92K from someone. We know because they went into the post office and bought a money order using someone else’s credit card. We got a picture from PNC bank ATM. This is the guy that did it. He’s from Florida. We tested out at the Montezuma PD with the facial recognition system and it recognized him. This is what the flock camera system does. Oglethorpe has been pretty quiet. Just some fighting up there at Carla Drive.
3. Librarian, Glenda Rigby – report to be emailed at first of the month
4. Water/Sewer/Streets, HWR Jeff Harrison – Anna Drive, did we ever make a decision? I know we were going after the insurance company to pay the excess amount that the DOT did not give. I think me and Ms. Jill talked about if we were just going to go ahead and pay for it and let the insurance money come back to the city? CM Harrison – yes, we decided that last session. Jeff – The contractor is has already been awarded to Sam Hall & Sons – they do good work. I’ll get in touch with Tim Ingram and let’s go ahead and get this ball rolling. CM Harrison – I talked to him today and he said the contracts are done, there will be a pre-construction meeting next week and they will start a few days afterwards. He anticipates that the whole job will be an 8- week job. Jeff – yes, It should go pretty quick. The hole is already open. Just get the pipes dropped in, etc. Next the consent order. Did you see it got extended for the waste water plant? CM Harrison – no. Jeff – there was a recommendation come down from EDP that they recommended that we extend it to November of 2025 because they know we are not going to get done by February of 2025. Tim Ingram sent them a recommendation back that we go to February of 2026 because there are some electrical components that we cannot get because they are a year out. Every email they send, I send it to Tim Ingram so that if a fine comes down it shows that our hands were tied. They did extend it out. Everything should be done. We are working on the electrical plans now. We are working on timers now so that one blower isn’t blowing all the time. I want them to alternate to relieve some of the stress on just one blower. Had a 2” blow-out down here on the dirt road by the waster water plant. We got it fixed. It froze and busted. We had a sewer main backed up over here, I believe Baker St. The main stopped up and he had to run 4 tanks of water through it to finally get it to break loose. We had the fire hydrant that got hit over by the dentist office on Hwy 26. It is cut off and isolated. We have a located called in on it. Once the locate is approved, we will be digging it up and getting it fixed. Somebody backed into it. There are poles up all around it, but they backed into it and pushed it over. There is a main broke over on Macon Street. Right now, it’s not leaking bad, but it’s broke. We have a locate called in on it and we hope to get it fixed the first part of next week. The gas station out here at Wright’s Grocery – he’s going to build some type of complex out there. Trucks, etc. We are going to run a 2” main out there from the 6” main that we already have out there. We are going to have to raise the man hole about 4 feet. I think it’s going to be a restaurant, a truck shop, and trucks. CM Harrison – So the liability out there is ours? Mayor Daniels – I thought the city limits stopped at the cemetery. Jeff – So he paid the city for the water line to be ran and he paid for the sewer tap. He bought all of the material and everything. So whatever the cost of the tap is, the city gets that portion. CM Harrison – That’s good. Jeff – We will be getting that taken care of up there. The line goes down Stagecoach Road. There is a guy down there that wants to build a house out there. He needs a water main extended so he can have water. We presented him with a price, but haven’t heard anything since. CM Harrison – Can I ask about the incident that happened over the weekend? I know that Cole said that the permanent fixed would be to just cut it off because it’s not needed. Is that what y’all decided to do? Jeff – The line is very shallow that runs up that dirt road and it froze and busted a valve in half. The best possible fix is to dig it up where that meets Clifton Bradley Dr. and then cut it off and kill it. It used to feed an old restaurant that was back there, but all that stuff is gone. CM Harrison – We dodged a bullet with that one and I think as a council we should vote on just letting them cut it off. Mayor Daniels – It doesn’t affect any citizens does it? Jeff – No, what it does is avoid a situation not needed. It couldn’t be cut off, so our guys had to come up on a Sunday morning and take care of. That’s pretty much it. We do have to have a company come in to core a man hole. The last time I had that done it was $450.00. This is putting a hole and a boot in the man hole. It keeps roots and debris from coming in. CM Harrison – Let’s talk about the GEFA Lead Service Line Grant has been approved. Jeff ‘s company says that’s work that he considers to be part of their contract with us anyway, but even though you’ve agreed to fold that into your contract, but still a line item would be needed. Jeff – What I tell town’s I deal with is when you have to show proof of what you used the grant money for and I’m already under contract. What I will do is send an invoice into the city that I did it for that amount. And you’ve paid me with the grant money by contract and that money goes into the city. That’s just the easiest way to do it. I’m already about 50% done with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ already. I have until October to finish it up. CM Harrison – And a lot of cities haven’t even started yet. Jeff – And the only way they can hold the cities liable for not doing it, is by withholding federal funds. Like if you get behind on your audits – you aren’t allowed to get grants or anything. If you don’t turn in this Lead Service Line project, then they will stop the other grant monies from coming in. I will follow their guidelines and get it done. Now they are talking about PVC so I don’t know where they are going with this. I started it, then they changed the format. I fixed it and they changed the format again. Supposedly the current format is the one they are going to keep. CM Harrison- I personally reached out to every Mayor in Macon County and asked them to jump a call so they would understand it, but then I was like well as long as Oglethorpe is good… Jeff – Yes it’s getting taken care of. There’s really only one area that we are having to dig up and that’s Macon Street on back to Anderson. Everything else has been redone. CM Bradley – We don’t ask CDBG to cover infrastructure yet, correct? Jeff – We don’t and I don’t think we will get one. CM Bradley – Why is that? Jeff – because CDBG doesn’t ……. There are some areas out there that won’t fall into that range. That out there would be Splost projects, GEFA loans, that type thing. Luckily, we’ve been saving a decent amount of money in the water fund. It can be used together with Splost.
5. Fire Department – report emailed monthly – Chief Childs – You may have noticed that your water might have been a little tinged this week, but we flushed the fire hydrants. Our audit will be tomorrow morning. We do have automatic back up with the city of Montezuma now. I emailed over the list of calls for the month. We used to rely heavily on Macon State Prison for wrecks, structure fires, etc. Their response isn’t what it used to be. They are still involved, but a lot of times a little bit later. CM Harrison – Why do you think that is? Chief Childs – They changed chiefs and I think she lives further away than the previous one and they can’t just leave from there by themselves. Ten years ago, they could go without the chief, but that’s not the case anymore. It takes 30 minutes to an hour. CM Woodard – So there isn’t a person they have say per shift? CM Mahone – That’s just the fire team itself and they don’t have someone around the clock. Chief Finch – They used to have someone staffed that could bring them out to a site until the chief could get there a long time ago. Chief Childs – yes, that’s what used to happen. CM Mahone – But now they just don’t have the manpower. Chief Childs – We have the other system in place now. Also, with ISO it makes us look better. CM Harrison – Tell us again what our number is. Chief Childs – I couldn’t locate our previous audit’s paperwork, but I know that we are a 5 currently. I’m not sure what end of the 5 though.

**Council/Committee Reports:**

1. Mayor Daniels - (New Business 1-9 below)
2. Human Resources/Finance –
3. Public Safety –
4. Utilities/Streets/Cemetery – CM Harrison – covered most of it. The prison detail will be doing a pick up Friday the 2nd. They will start between 9am and 10am and work up until 5pm. We just have to feed them. CM Bradley – I forgot to ask, what is the brush and limb pick-up schedule? Jeff – It’s sectioned off and a listing is posted. CM Bradley – I just noticed some of the side streets like Church St. isn’t getting picked up. It’s been there for like 2 months. The house next to us. It’s the tiny streets. CM Harrison – Just text me when you see that and I’ll check into it. Jeff – Or put a call into Melissa and she will make sure the guys get it. CM Bradley – oh, ok. I wasn’t sure how we did that.
5. Planning & Recreation – CM Mahone – nothing to discuss. CM Harrison – So there is a Mr. Kendrick who is planning an Oglethorpe Pop-Up Shop on Sunday March 10, 2024. It’s $50 per vendor and he’s asking for any kind of vendor. It’s a Sunday, so probably mainly food vendors from 11:30AM – 5:00PM. We just need to be sure that we are on the same page with charging him. I think the fee we agreed to then when we were in that mode was $150 to utilize the park and they will have access to the restroom. I think we added on a $75.00 upfront cleaning fee if we have to clean the park. I just wanted to bring it to your attention as Mayor Daniels sent it to me. CM Bradley – So the restrooms they use are in the business center side? When I worked in the office, the DDA took care of the contracts. Now that that’s not a paid position, are you having to do all of that and then it comes to Melissa? CM Harrison – No, Melissa. CM Bradley – Ok, so they are doing a contract so the liability is not on the city and they are paying that fee and we don’t have to have the police there because the size is small right? CM Harrison – I was going to ask to be sure to have the police there. Chief Finch – We will be there. Mayor Daniels – I think 50 or more people you do. Chief Finch – Any time you have any event, we will be there. CM Bradley – Once you get it, I would ask the Down Town Oglethorpe page to share it. Jeff – yes and they get the $75.00 deposit back if they clean it up. CM Daniels – Is everybody in agreement with that? (yes all around) CM Harrison – It’s actually $150 to use the park and $75 cleaning fee they get back. So, $225.00 total. Mayor Daniels – Ok. CM Harrison – I would like us to do a Food Truck once a month we will discuss later.

**New Business:**

1) Cell Phones for Council – Dept Chair – Mayor Daniels – I think we need cell phones. I’m big on availability so citizens can be heard. I’m asking could we get approval for cell phones for the city council. Jeff – Can I say something Mr. Mayor? (sure) City cell phones, you need to understand, if you handle any city business on your personal phone, they can confiscate it, so it’s great to have a city cell phone. This is my personal phone, so if anything ever comes up, they can get it. Mayor Daniels – I’m just throwing that out there. Make ourselves accessible and cut back on people come down here. We can just make a call and I see this a helpful way and we can communicate with each other as well without using our personal phones. Like the day of the storms, people were calling my personal phone. CM Bradley – There are a lot of options out there and we don’t have to have a smart phone, we can just a cheap very basic phone. A cell phone provider that uses Verizon towers but with a plan of $20 - $30 per month. So, we’re not using citizens tax money for expensive phones that we don’t need. Other cities might have some resources as well. I know that other towns do this and I think that if we decide to do this than Melissa needs one as well as she definitely catches a lot of the phone calls, and Jeff as well.

2) Committee Appointments - Finance/Human Resources I have CM Bradley, CM Harrison, and myself, Public Safety – CM Mahone, CM Harrison, and I was going to request CM Woodard and I will honestly be on all of them. Utilities – CM Harrison, CM Beckum, and CM Woodard. Planning/Recreation – CM Harrison, CM Mahone, and Mayor Daniels. I will get that to Melissa to get printed up and follow that.

3) Personnel Overview – Chain of Command – It would be the Mayor, the City Clerk, and then the Department Heads. Melissa will call me about certain things when they go on. I should relay the message and that’s why I’m putting things in place so I don’t overstep. I work at the school and I’m the Mayor. I’m just putting things in place so that we all respect each other and handle business the correct way. So, it’s the Mayor, the City Clerk, and then Department Heads. The Department Heads report to the City Clerk and the City Clerk reports to the Mayor. I’m not saying anything outside of that, we have to go strictly by the guideline, but we need something in place. I’m not saying if there is something you need to tell me that you have to call Melissa first, but…. CM Harrison – Has there been some infraction or something? Mayor Daniels – No, it’s just. CM Harrison – Just establishing order. Mayor Daniels – Yes. It’s how I communicate. CM Bradley – Since there are no Department Heads anymore, do you mean Chairpersons of Committees? Mayor Daniels – Sorry, yes that’s what I meant. So if Melissa can’t reach me for something, she can call on the Chairpersons for assistance. CM Harrison – So you will be the last one if necessary? Mayor Daniels – Well not last one, ya’ll can still call me, but just trying to put in some guidelines here.

4) Brief overview of Police Dept Policy & Procedure – Everyone should have a copy on their desk I had Ms. Melissa copy tickets for everyone so we can have a brief overview of the police dept policy and procedures for tickets. Chief Finch – Last year we brought in a whole lot of new officers that were coming in over here and we had to get them trained. If you looking at it right now, the ticket revenue is pretty much increasing. One thing we have done is we just got a new software system in Montezuma, as well as Oglethorpe. Some of this stuff Ms. Cindy had to handwrite. If a Montezuma officer write a ticket she had to come in and handwrite a citation over here. So what Ms. Williamson done, it doesn’t matter what city you are in, you can write a ticket from our cars in Oglethorpe as well. I talked to the judge about that and he agreed to do that as well. If a Montezuma car stops somebody here, it can import into Ms. Cindy’s computer so she won’t have to do any work or anything like that. Ms. Williamson changed all that. This can increase the volume of tickets. If you look at that now you can see the volume of tickets has dramatically increased. CM Bradley – What is the revenue on the tickets? I don’t see that anywhere. Chief Finch – We didn’t get the $66K, but we were saving money on other stuff. CM Bradley – We should get a report though every month on revenue and expenses just from a business standpoint. Chief Finch – you get that. (Ms. Cindy does it at the end of each month). You can ask the judge, we bringing the cases in municipal court, but if a fine has a number, we can’t reduce our tickets a lot. CM Bradley – I’m just saying from a business stand point, there should be a profit and loss sheet. Just where we are. I understand what you’re saying that we can’t control the fines and all. Chief Finch – We put some measurements in place and now you got Officer Cruthirds certified with radar and got Officer Whitehead certified with the DUI as well. We talked with Officer Dunson and he is good about writing hands free. The thing about that though is all you have to do is produce a blue tooth to the court and it gets reduced down to a warning. My thing is not to do too much writing something that we aren’t getting the meat and potatoes from. Officer Whitehead is writing a lot of suspended license citations. They ain’t going to pay that $400 when they go to court, they get put on probation. But say you write a speeding ticket, they are going to pay it right then, because if they don’t their license get suspended. CM Harrison – How many full- time is on Oglethorpe payroll and how many part time? Chief Finch – 2 Officer Whitehead and Cruthirds. Part time is also 2 Guerrero and Dunson. CM Woodard – so they are pretty much here in Oglethorpe? Chief Finch – Yes, but we run both cities. We run 4 to 5 officers here with a supervisor on every shift. My supervisor is floating. If the officer in Oglethorpe is here, I have an officer from Montezuma that’s going to back him up. So, no one is on a call by themselves. Ya’lls officer is the 4th or 5th guy on the shift. If your guy calls in sick, I don’t have to call anyone in and pay overtime. So, Montezuma is paying something free for you. I’m pulling my staff over here instead of bringing your other one in on their off day. So, we rotating. I bring my officers over here to cover when needed. Do your officers spend a lot of time in Montezuma – no. Do our guys spend a lot of time over here – yes. We will always roll a car through Oglethorpe, no one will go by themselves to a call. CM Woodard – That’s understandable. My point is you have 4 plus you. So, you have what 2 shifts? Chief Finch – 4 shifts. We run two 12-hour shifts. A day and night. CM Woodard – So if we have 4 people on and we are kind of together right now. In reference to this ticket issue, then that means we shouldn’t have this problem anymore because it should be whomever you have working here, should have the tickets in Oglethorpe. Chief Finch – And they write tickets, that’s the increase. CM Woodard – I don’t mean to cut you off. I guess you’re missing what I’m trying to get to. I understand what you’re talking about the revenue issue, but what I’m looking at because I’m an accountant, what I’m looking at is with this right here, if I was an auditor coming in, I would say somebody is hiding something and it’s going to throw up like fifty red flags. Chief Finch – What do you mean? CM Woodard – Because it’s hand written. Chief Finch – Yes, that’s hand written, but what I’m saying is what we doing it doesn’t matter if it’s hand written or not because we talked to the judge about that. As long as it’s on a uniform traffic citation it doesn’t matter because a lot of agencies don’t even have computers. They have to handwrite them. So, it’s not going to throw up anything. CM Woodard – But when they have it like that, it’s not printed like their city name on these tickets. Chief Finch – It just like to change that, to make you understand what I’m saying, it’s just like the state patrol. If the state patrol writes a citation, it ain’t going to have Oglethorpe listed on it, it’s going to have GSP. As long as, and according to the judge, as long as we got that contract and we are handling it and we giving them in Oglethorpe, this ticket is good. CM Harrison – I thought that you equipped all of the officers with the Oglethorpe ticket book? Is that not correct? Chief Finch – Yes, but now we have that new technology. If we do that, here’s the problem. We trying to cut Ms. Cindy out. CM Bradley – What do you mean by cutting her out? CM Woodard – What do you mean? Chief Finch – What I mean is if I let them write on a Oglethorpe citation, that means Ms. Cindy has to deal with that handwritten citation. She got to now type all that stuff into our system. CM Woodard – Ok, but that’s good it keeps everything in check. Like I said, I’m not worried about the revenue portion and I thank y’all for doing that, but I’m looking at it from an auditing standpoint whereas if I’m coming into the city and I’m sitting down and looking at the books and I see these tickets, I want to know why does this ticket have Montezuma on it, but it’s scratched. So I don’t have a problem with them handwriting citations and Ms. Cindy typing them in because that’s her job. Chief Finch – I gotcha. But what we have done now. We won’t have any handwritten like that. It’s going to be on a computer -generated uniform ticket. CM Woodard – And the officers are going to make sure that they are switching their ORI over for the correct city. Chief Finch – yes, they are going to be switching it to Oglethorpe Court. The ORI doesn’t matter. It’s going to the court. That’s all that matters. CM Harrison – so if you come in with a Montezuma NCIC number to an Oglethorpe Court, that’s not going to be a problem? Chief Finch – No, that’s not going to be a problem. Chief Finch – That’s not a problem. CM Harrison – That bothers me. Chief Finch – I tell you what, as long as we under contract, this is what we can do. What we trying to do is make it easier on Ms. Cindy. It ain’t no problem for them to hand write it. CM Bradley – I would rather them handwrite it so we can have all the checks and balances in the system and make her job harder. Chief Finch – That ain’t no problem. CM Bradley – I think we need the paper trail and also when it comes to signing a contract with the police department or not, we also need to see if we are making enough money to make things sustainable or not. We can’t just keep writing the checks without the revenue coming in. But we need to be able to follow a paper trail and I haven’t seen anything clear yet. It’s very confusing as I haven’t seen anything that’s clearly documented and I’m not stupid. I need it to be streamlined. I feel like this is half-hazard throwing things around and so it’s very difficult to follow it. Chief Finch- Well to make it understandable, let’s say that the Macon Co Sheriff Dept write a citation inside the city of Oglethorpe. Let’s say Sheriff Woodard becomes sheriff and his deputy sees a violation inside Oglethorpe. He can write a citation on a ticket book and then send it to Ms. Cindy. That’s the same thing is what we’re doing. CM Bradley – That’s not the part that confuses me. I want the reports showing this is what happened. I’m a visual person. I have to see it. Chief Finch – That’s not a problem. I was just saying if your husband becomes sheriff , he is not going to write tickets on an Oglethorpe or Montezuma ticket book. CM Woodard – I understand that. I know how that works. Chief Finch – To answer your question. Once it gets to Ms. Cindy and gets coded into her system, that’s where it will get logged in as an Oglethorpe citation for the track record you are talking about. CM Harrison – I think what bothers me is that seeing that the citations were entered into Montezuma’s system and they should have been brought over to Ms. Cindy within a couple of days to be entered and they were not. Chief Finch – We are clear cut on that. We have a process that we do. When they come into Ms. Cindy, we track ourselves. We bring the citations over with the date and time that we bring them over. We have all that paperwork. I have a booklet for Oglethorpe. I got my own audit trail. CM Bradley – good. I want to see it and make sure that we are doing things on the up and up. Things in the past were not done that way and that’s how Oglethorpe got into some of the situations that it got in. Chief Finch – We are deputized. We can even write tickets in the county. CM Bradley – So can we pretend like it’s 2015 and hand write them then in Oglethorpe. I think we need the paper trail. Captain Hill – The officers if they have to hand write them, won’t write as many tickets. CM Bradley – What I’m saying is I want them done right. Chief Finch – That’s what I’m basically saying. What we did was, it comes to the Oglethorpe court. CM Bradley – yes, but I want it on our NCIC number. CM Harrison – yes, that’s what I think, also. CM Bradley – It just does not feel transparent with the wrong number. Chief Finch – Ok so what I’ll do is let our guys from Montezuma know to handwrite theirs. Officers Cruthirds, Whitehead, and Dunson they are going to translate over to Ms. Cindy anyway. CM Bradley – I’m saying let’s be transparent, that way when citizens say they don’t see police here, we don’t see this or that. We need to be able to say here. That’s not going to be clear to the average citizen because it’s not clear right now. Does that make sense? I know it’s a pain, I’m sorry. Chief Finch- It’s not going to be a pain. I agree with you. No problem. CM Bradley – It’s the citizen’s money. CM Harrison – So, Melissa for the record. Add CM Woodard to Finance Committee and remove Mayor Daniels. Chief Finch – But to answer ya’lls question, we will do it any way ya’ll want it while we are under contract. We will handwrite it. CM Bradley – If it’s clear that it’s the Oglethorpe NCIC number then that’s fine, but if not then handwrite it. CM Woodard – If Montezuma comes over, yes then handwrite it out to make sure it’s correct. We are all human and there is human error. I’m just looking at it from an auditing standpoint and if I had come down here to audit Oglethorpe, I would have my people down here…. Chief Finch- Ok, there is no problem with doing that. I want to show you the detailed report that we give Melissa every month as backup. I’m talking about a detailed list. CM Harrison – Do you have an example for the next meeting? Chief Finch – I send that report the first of every month. (City Clerk has not received a detailed monthly report – just a monthly invoice. Will request the 2023 reports for review and to file). CM Bradley – ok, I just didn’t see one at the last meeting. Chief Finch – I have a detailed report and normally every call we go on, I have it listed. CM Bradley – I appreciate that very much.

5) Post Meeting – hear from citizens for concerns/suggestions – 2 minutes – Mayor Daniels – I know we have the 3- minute rule for meetings when on Agenda. But I feel like if we do something post meeting, we could let those that didn’t make the agenda could give some vital information. Now if you are on the agenda every meeting, that is a problem. CM Harrison – I don’t know why something says this is tied to our charter, I can’t remember exactly… Mayor Daniels – I know that we just did the 3 minutes and they had to request to be on the Agenda two weeks out. This is just me adding this. CM Harrison – For work sessions only? Mayor Daniels – What do you all think? CM Harrison – I think that for Work Sessions this is fine, but not for the regular meeting. Mayor Daniels – So just go with the Agenda list for the regular meetings. Jeff – Just add to the end of the Agenda add Public Comments. CM Bradley – That would solve a lot of problems. RogerAnn wrote an article about how local governments come off as not being very friendly, but that months ago, but it’s the citizen’s money so… Jeff – You are going to… you could get into a situation where one person is speaking and then another speaks over and the next thing you know there will be a big argument and then what. I’ve seen it before. Mayor Daniels – Got you. It’s just a thought.

6) Budget Overview – Payroll/Contracts etc. – We need to review these. So, get with Melissa and see the contracts we have and what we’re paying and see where we’re at financially. CM Harrison – Maybe we should meet from 5-6 before the next work session strictly for budget. Mayor Daniels – Sounds good.

7) Nomination of Flint Energies for the Renaissance Award offer by GMA – Mayor Daniels recommends Renaissance Award for Flint Energies as they do so much for Oglethorpe and Macon County. The application just has to be turned in. For the Star Award, I recommend Kenny Welch. I see him out there every morning working on the streets, etc. He is part of the DDA. His contributions are many. I believe his wife is a member of the Garden Club and they work hand in hand to make Oglethorpe look good. Those are my recommendations and you can put in other names if you like. CM Bradley – I think it’s great for both. CM Harrison – Yes, I agree.

8) “Keep Oglethorpe Clean” sign from GENTS for Anna Dr and Smith Rd – Mayor Daniels – The G.E.N.T.S. have picked the trash up on these roads for about 2 years and Mr. Bray made some signs for us and I would like to put them up if you all are in agreement. The kids are doing something good and I would like them to see they are appreciated. I know there’s some trash out there now, but it’s been cold. This generation, the work is here, but the workers aren’t. So, I just wanted to get ya’lls permission. CM Harrison – Can we float that into our Keep America Clean grant that we have to implement in March that Leisa got for us? CM Bradley – Yes. I would also see if you could partner with the Garden Club for some of that. I think a lot of these started with the garden clubs. CM Harrison – Yes. We have to do several things for this grant. We won money for a camera system and everything. Previous council said she would be glad to come in and help with that.

9) Grant Committee for Grant Purposes only – Mayor Daniels wants to start a Grant Committee. Most people focus on now, but we need to plan ahead. Looking at 2025, 2026, and 2027 – there are a lot of grants out there. We need to get them and put them to work and help Oglethorpe. I need your thoughts on this. Let’s meet once a month, etc. I met with Rebecca White from DCA and they have booklets and forms for grants for EVERYTHING. CM Bradley – Bring in like partners and stuff, like non-council members? Mayor Daniels – Yes. We have sponsors for events like International Paper and have had Flint Energies and so forth. I think if just a couple of us got together and met and started reviewing these grants, we can get the city thriving a little bit. CM Bradley and CM Harrison both think it’s a great idea. CM Harrison – So you want a mix of council and non-council? Mayor Daniels – maybe some stake holders. CM Bradley – A lot of the grants that are out there, stake holders can contribute towards the match required for the grants. Mayor Daniels – Even at the High School, they had a CTA program and Mr. Pete and I work together on that and he comes and talks to the kids about agriculture and all. CM Bradley – Realistically with the city paying off everything with the IRS and working through that. We may not be able to apply for anything until 2025. Mayor Daniels – Right, I was just thinking let’s get something put into place. CM Bradley – I feel like in the past, the problem with rural areas is there is not planning and foresight. It’s throwing something against the wall and wondering why you are not successful. I think we need to take a step back, listen to the citizens and what they want. Then let’s map it out and come up with a strategic plan and it takes a lot of time to that, but that’s the right way to do it. I mean Perry was a hot mess 20 years ago. I mean it was ugly. It was awful. Lot’s of crime and lots of issues. Look at it now. It didn’t happen because of the interstate. It was a lot of hard work in years going into it with people making hard choices. DCA and DDA will tell you it’s a marathon and not a sprint. If you take the time to plan, it would be smart and successful. Mayor Daniels – And by that time we may be termed out, but whatever we sew the city will reap.

10) Connected Resilient Communities program – CM Bradley – This program falls under UGA’s Archway Program. This program is the technical assistance program where you are partnering with the University of Georgia and you have access to all of their colleges, their faculty, their students. With the Archway Program you pay around $60K-$70K a year to be in that program. The reason you pay for it is if you don’t have money in the game, you usually don’t take it seriously. Number two, it’s for cities that can’t afford to hire the proper staff that you need to be done in the city and so they are standing in place of the staff that you can’t afford to hire. It would be like having 6 to 10 more people on your staff and we all know that that’s not going to happen. For economic reasons. But this Connected Resilient program came out for cities like that, like Oglethorpe. That program is free. It’s extremely competitive because everybody wants free. It’s a 2- year program and basically (Jill and I were on a webinar today) before you put in an application you have to know who your stake holders are. You have to form an Executive Committee. It needs to be a mix of a couple of elected officials, it needs to be a couple of staff, stake holders that invest in your community, and also like the garden club, board of education, Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce, and then citizens. Maybe church representation would be key for this community. CM Harrison – My notes say the Archway professional would look to your executive committee which is community stake holders who set priorities around complex, identify needs and issues, then … CM Bradley – They kept stating it cannot be the same people that you see at everything because one there is a large number of people who are not being heard, and number two if you keep tapping the same people they are going to tap out. CM Harrison – and it seemed slanted. CM Bradley- And in that program you come up with 3 projects to tackle. Only 3. There are 3 levels. Silver, Gold, and Platinum. You get a level for each project you complete. We’re not ready for this yet. I think this is a year to start laying the foundation. Seeing who shows up for the council meetings all the time, who has a vested in your community, who are the leaders in your churches, what organizations do we have that doesn’t just talk about Montezuma if it is a county-wide group, they need to care about Oglethorpe also. Those people get a seat at the table because they will help Oglethorpe. Then you can move forward and work on those projects. The Executive Committee determines the projects based on data that comes from UGA. They know how to collect it all and deliver it on a silver platter. One of the things that Flint Energies wants to do as a community partner, and my job, so right now I’m not a city council member – I’m a Flint Energies person, they want me to go into cities who are serious about wanting to do this and we partner with them and help put money towards some of the projects and also staff to help make it happen. One of the things the director of the Archway Program, Michelle, spoke to me about is she really loved our Flint Energies Empower Youth Leadership model that’s regional. Six counties this year and she said so many of these tiny communities have such a hard time doing it on their own. If we can’t get it together as just the City of Oglethorpe, we might want to look into for example partnering with Reynolds, partnering with Butler, or other cities within the county. It basically needs to be people that you work well with, other cities that you work well with. I don’t think the county as a whole will go for it because of other ideas pitched to the county didn’t go over well. I think this could be a pivotal thing. It’s technical help and we desperately need that. They have experts in the area that can help make rural Georgia substaniable. Once you have that, long term 20 - year vision of what it can look like, you bring in the vibrancy that stacks over it. A lot of people in our city get confused and think that the city government is in charge of brining in industry, but that’s not our job. We don’t have industry space in the city of Oglethorpe. It’s 1.5 square miles or something like that. We don’t have an industrial park, that is located in Montezuma. So that falls under the DDA of Macon Co. We have downtown and areas surrounding downtown. Jill and I wish the webinar was a little more detailed. They have offered to have a private meeting with us, even at a work session. Even if they can’t be here physically, we can have a zoom meeting and everyone can fire off questions. Just hearing more about it would help. Laying the foundation work will take months. One of the hardest things to do here is getting people to step up. CM Harrison – And stay with it. It’s not overnight. And the areas they want us to address are economic development, leadership, education and workforce development, quality of life, and health and wellness. We have to pick 3 target areas out of that. CM Daniels – So, I heard you say that we’re not ready. CM Bradley – There’s just a lot of pre-work that has to be done. If we were to apply right now, they would not select us, and they shouldn’t. Mayor Daniels – How do we get ready? CM Harrison – I think the grant committee that you spoke of. I think without knowing it, we are actually getting ready now. I think the grant committee, strong department heads, paying attention to who’s engaged. Mayor Daniels – And we go from there. CM Bradley – It’s about your biggest complaints from the citizens because they would be the best people for these committees. They just want to be heard so what better be heard than to serve. That’s what they suggest you do. Some of the things that we’ve already talked about like the housing could be something. Mayor Daniels – I like the health and wellness, also. CM Harrison – Me, too. Because there is no hospital here. CM Bradley – Mercer Rural Health, they are working on a program for Macon County right now. Not a hospital, but they are in the research part for Macon County. Jeff – We’ve talked about this before. You have a big draw with the river here. You go to Columbus and they have the big things with the River Walk and all. You partner with Montezuma, they’re on the other side of the river, and you have this whole section of nothing but river walk, stores, restaurants, etc. CM Harrison – Bicycle and walking trails, etc. CM Bradley – And Columbus only recently found their identity in that. Chief Finch – Better move quick because the City of Montezuma invested $3million for a river walk \_\_\_\_\_. CM Bradley – To me I feel like it’s not a competition. We will both benefit. CM Harrison – We received a grant for that before and hand the give the money back because of something with the railroad. CM Bradley – yes, the railroad wouldn’t cooperate. Mayor Daniels – So what happens if we get those 7 days of rain and the water rises…. Jeff – The way it’s done over there the river walk is built way up to prepare you for that. They get far enough back away from it also. There’s an amphitheater, fountains, etc. You have a lot of stuff here. The old ferry etc. and all you have to do is develop it. CM Bradley – It that’s something we decide to pursue, RVRC already has a bike and pedestrian path plans. There is a ton of grants for that. That’s things that won’t cost us. Mayor Daniels – Lets put together some Town Hall Meetings. CM Harrison – and prepare for 2025. Not this y ear. CM Bradley – Out of necessity if nothing else.

**Old Business:**

1) Police Chief Position – CM Harrison – In late 2023 CM Cross reviewed a series of resumes and deduced the pool down to 6 where she hosted 6 virtual interviews. Of the 6, only 3 showed up. Two of them have already accepted other positions. One in Perry, Ga and one in Jacksonville, FL. Mr. Hicks is still available and still very interested. I talked to him two weeks ago and then last week to just make sure. I think that we need to move forward with an in-person interview with council. Get the ball rolling. CM Bradley – What was the reservation about him? CM Harrison – Nothing. There was reservation with the young man in Jacksonville because he had been in law enforcement for quite a while, and then left to work for the secret service. So questionable as to why he wanted to move from a big metro area to Oglethorpe, also. And the other gentleman in North Ga, he had all kinds of experience as well as being a game warden supervisor. Like next to the highest person in the state. Very familiar with everything especially in a rural area. But he kind of rubbed CM Cross the wrong way. She had reservations about him, but she liked him. CM Mahone – I need you to send that information over. CM Harrison – Ok, I will send it to all. CM Bradley – So how far away does he live? CM Harrison – He’s in Perry. CM Bradley – Oh, so he could potentially. He doesn’t have to relocate? CM Harrison – No, and he’s pretty much done everything except be a police chief. Mayor Daniels – When is the contract up? CM Harrison – April 24, 2024. CM Mahone – Is that his information that you have right there? CM Harrison – yes, you want me to forward it to you? I can do it right now. CM Bradley – So, if you move to the in-person interview, who is part of the interview process? Is that the Public Safety and Human Resources Committees? I don’t remember how that…. Mayor Daniels – In the past, it was the whole council and Mayor. We had a round table and we all went through the interview process. We also had an expert involved. CM Bradley – Do you think that Matt, who is impartial, could sit in on it as an expert? CM Woodard – I can ask. CM Bradley – I mean would that be ok? CM Harrison – We were going to ask him previously, but because he worked with one of the candidates, we opted not to. CM Woodard - I would think maybe ask Chief Wesley Cannon or Cedric Duncan? Chief Finch – I can get with Cedric or Wesley. CM Bradley – It seems like Chief Finch, if you were there, maybe not this one, but maybe a follow-up in a later one. Mayor Daniels – You know we neighbors so. Chief Finch – We will do whatever ya’ll want us to do. Mayor Daniels – So with the contract ending in 2 months, we don’t have much time. CM Woodard – 30 days before we say ok. CM Harrison – So we really need to have made a decision by March if the contract ends in late April so that we are not up against the wall at the last minute. I sent the information to all of you. Mayor Daniels – So we really don’t have a lot of time. CM Bradley – Did he say in your interview why he would want to come here with all of his experience? I think it would be a pay cut for him to come here. CM Harrison – He wants experience, loves the small town, wants to make a difference. He’s very community centered. He looked as if he may be a little older than me, so maybe wants a little slower pace. CM Bradley – Oh, ok. Mayor Daniels – When we started out I think the contract was 6 months and this is just me and my suggestion with the time frame. If we are not ready and we can’t make a move yet… I mean are we just going to let them go? We might need some patrolling. CM Bradley – No. I think that we would have to extend it. We don’t need to get ourselves in a bad situation. I would like to revisit the contracts because we weren’t a part of it and I don’t understand some of it. I don’t know what the arrangement was. CM Harrison – No, not abandoned ship. We just want to explore what is out there because in the beginning we are going to actively seek a chief, so that’s what this was. Of course, people are not beating down the doors to come to Oglethorpe. Mayor Hill – Right. It just needs to be thought about. CM Bradley – Just like everything else, I agree. CM Harrison – So we need a copy of the contract to be sent to everyone. I’ve already sent the resume. Chief Finch – I have a copy of it. CM Harrison – Can we go ahead and identify some dates. Mayor Daniels – Yes, let’s do that. If we have to call a special meeting to make some decisions, ya’ll will just have to make yourselves available. Look at your calendars and see what works for ya’ll. CM Bradley – you said something about meeting next Thursday prior to the council meeting? Oh, not next week. CM Mahone – I’m free on the 19th. CM Bradley – I’m free also. Mayor Daniels – What time? CM Harrison – What about 6pm? In person interview. Mayor Daniels – Who has the questions? CM Harrison – Do we want to come up with our own questions or use a template? Chief Finch – I can get that for you. CM Woodard – Will you be here on the 19th as well? Chief Finch – Let me check my schedule. CM Bradley – I really, really need to do that on Monday if we can. CM Harrison – Yes, I have to be in OH on the 22nd. Mayor Daniels – We are going to shoot for Monday. CM Harrison – If he cannot do the 19th, I will ask about the 22nd. I’ll ask if the 19th works for him. Mayor Daniels – That email you sent about Kaigler St, was that trash in the yard? Chief Finch – I done sent an officer up there to take care of it. Talking form the audience about a fox up on Kaigler looking for food. Mayor Daniels – There’s a railroad track back there and when the water comes up it pushes the animals and such up in there.

**Other Business:**

**Adjourn:** 8:01PM Mayor Daniels