CITY OF OGLETHORPE

OGLETHORPE CITY HALL

115 CHATHAM STREET

COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

OCTOBER 26, 2023 – 6:00PM

Call to order: Pro-tem Cross 6:00PM (Mayor came in a minute later)

Department Head Reports:

1. City Clerk, Melissa Jones – report emailed to council prior to meeting.
2. Police Dept – Cindy Kleckley / Interim Chief Finch – October 1 was dispatched to Carlos Hankerson home on Randolph St. October 13 gunshots at Randolph and Cuyler St. The next day someone came up to the police dept and told us he was robbed. We locked up two people. Two will be charged as adults. They went to a house on Oliver St and robbed them. Officer Cruthirds was the officer on the case and our officers also worked it. On the 24th there was a big fight on Carla Dr. We locked up two females. The dogs at Dollar General; we have had multiple complaints. We tried to get them and was going to load them up. This has been an ongoing problem all over the county. We need somewhere to put these dogs if we pick them up. We need a humane society for the entire county. No one outside of the county will accept our dogs as they have their own to deal with. CM Harrison – Prior to the county manager’s departure, I had spoken to him about this issue. I asked if he would be open to bringing all of the officials from all municipalities together to see if we could get $ from each city to see if we could come up with a salary to hire at least a part time person. Chief Finch – The city of Montezuma had reached out to the county because we had a part-time Animal Control Officer, a truck and everything. We had $17K for this. We asked the county to go half-in-half on this with us so that we could have a full-time person and they could service all of Macon Co. They didn’t want to because you have to have somewhere to house these animals. I just wanted to explain that we did try to catch the dogs, but I haven’t seen them in the last couple of days. The main reason they stayed there because Dollar General folks were feeding them. Also, you will probably hear on the news that one of the escapees from Macon was caught in Montezuma on Shiloh Church Road. The girl there let the authorities know he showed up over there. GBI is involved. Flock Cameras should be installed on Nov. 16, 2023. GDOT has approved. The Macon Co Jail – David Parrott said that everything he was sending over to the county for the repairs, the county manager said not to fix it. That concerns me. Especially with the things he bought illegally, over $50K worth of stuff could have gone towards that. Other opportunities. We will be at the Oglethorpe Trick or Treat. This coming Sunday at 3PM, Jehovah Baptist Church will be having a trick or treat event over there. Same day is the Preston Williams Center event, First Baptist Church, and United Methodist Church as well. But I prefer this over the door to door trick or treating due to the way the world is today. Christmas Parade – Mrs. Jones sent me an email advising the date and time. I had my secretary go ahead and write the permit for using the main roads. CM Harrison – Just let me know about your choir for the Veteran’s Day Ceremony.
3. Librarian, Glenda Rigby – report to be emailed at first of the month
4. Water/Sewer/Streets, HWR Jeff Harrison – We had 3 leaks this month that we fixed. One was a 2” main by the waste water plant. Had another called in today and we will get it fixed next week. Anna Drive has been approved by LMIG/GDOT. Ad is already sent to the paper and has to run for 30 days. We will be accepting sealed bids and I think they will be dropped off here. As soon as the bid is opened up, work can begin immediately. Barriers are up across both sides of the road. CM Cross – What about a dirt run? Jeff – I’ve spoken with Chief Finch about that, but bringing in that dirt would cause more issues with having to be removed, etc. They would question that because they’ve already quoted. You do have the budget there and it shows that water/sewer is doing. Substantial amount over the last couple of years. CM Harrison – Yes and I do want to let you know that I did get a quote from Richard at the Housing Authority to fix the entrances at Asbury for like $50K? He asked if we could have Shepherd Paving look at it. Jeff – Do you think we need to put a pipe across there? CM Cross – Why would be responsible for it? CM Harrison – We’re not, they’re paying for it. Jeff – It’s right where they come off Asbury and it drops down. CM Mahone – The water just sits and doesn’t drain so there needs to be some type of pipe there to let it drain. When it rains, it fills up both sides of the driveways. CM Harrison – And it’s not our responsibility, but because it is our people complaining about it and it’s in Oglethorpe, I told them I would have our people give them a quote. Jeff – And it causes erosion and stuff. CM Harrison – I also wanted to bring up about this trash situation. I did a little investigating and I know that we have residents that are upset because they think they shouldn’t have to pay someone else extra to pick up mattresses, appliances, etc. but I knew I heard this back in December of 2020, the council did approve and add to our policy that we only pick up limbs, leaves, etc. When Jeff and them came in to take over the guys that were still here, were still picking up the appliances and home stuff, and that’s why I think he put it into his contract? Jeff – Yes, that’s what we saw so we put it in there. CM Harrison – So what is the remedy because we can’t go against our own policy/charter? CM Mahone – Their issue is like we have dumpster, and it’s good, but if I’m already paying a trash pick -up why am I having to pay someone if I don’t have a truck? There was one lady who even asked for her money back because she doesn’t have a truck. CM Harrison – But the thing is, she is not paying for it because that is not what the policy states. It does not state that the city is responsible for picking it up. I get it that she doesn’t have a truck, I don’t either. When my yard guy comes, I just have to pay him to pick up random stuff. CM Mahone – What about limbs? CM Harris – We pick up limbs less than 6ft. Jeff – She’s talking about limbs? CM Mahone – Yes. Jeff – Where’s she at? CM Mahone - …. Jeff – now we pick up all the limbs. The only time we don’t is if we see a contractor over there cutting down trees or if they are over 6ft long. I believe the reason they have in the ordinance the 6 ft long is because the truck is only so big and the limbs were hanging off the back and falling into the road. CM Mahone – Right there on Asbury where the water they talking about, some limbs been there for 3 months. Jeff – Where? CM Mahone – That first driveway for the Asbury apartments. Jeff - So it’s in the Housing Authority? CM Mahone – Right there on the side of the road. Jeff – On Asbury? Ok, I will address that. If you see any issues all you have to do is let me know and I will address it with the guys. CM Mahone – Where they were putting that new camera system in there, they had to move some of that stuff out of the way so they could put that pole in there. CM Cross – Melissa had said at that meeting that if anyone had things that were not getting picked up, all they had to do was give her a call and let her know. Jeff – A lot of times, and Melissa can probably show you the feedback, videos, and everything. If he goes out there and there’s trash mixed in with the limbs, he will not pick it up. He will take a video/pictures of it and send it to Ms. Melissa to show why he isn’t picking it up. CM Harrison – He has sent me the videos/pictures as well. Jeff – Because they have to go to two separate places. The trash has to go over to the dumpster area and limbs have to go up here to this area. You can’t put trash up here because they won’t chip it. There was one that had gutters and plastic stuff in it. He took a video of it, sent it to Ms. Melissa. She called the resident. The next day they went out there and the lady had separated the stuff out and he was able to pick up the limbs. If it’s a whole tree, he’s not going to pick it up or if they are over 6ft long. He has documentation on why he doesn’t pick some piles up because he is trying to follow the rules/policy that the city put into place. CM Mahone - We need to redo that ordinance then because we have to come up with some type of solution other than that stuff just sitting there. Madison Porter – What if our citizens don’t have a saw to cut up a limb? What do they do then? Do your guys carry a saw with them to help them cut that limb up? Jeff – I believe they have some saws back there for storms and all. CM Cross – That would not be the city’s responsibility. I can give you an example. My husband has to go up to my sister’s and do it when they fall. Jeff – I can tell you there was an entire tree out by that one pile and they left it there. She called and told them, they went out there and cut it up. The resident actually said he hadn’t cut it up yet because he couldn’t get to it. Once ya’ll picked that pile up, I went out and cut it up. Wasn’t a problem at all. We went out and picked it up the next day. We are just trying to follow the orders that we were given. CM Harrison – Well to be in compliance with it, I know that your contract automatically renews every October. Will you fix the verbiage so that it’s the same as the policy? I mean I know that we need to come up with a remedy, but… Jeff – well before the waste water plant gate stay closed all the time, well now we leave it open and just lock up the pond, so everyone has access to a dumpster. Still we are picking up household garbage all over the city – the cemetery, the parks, the post office, everywhere. CM Harrison – Now Mr. Harris did refer me to a young man who stated that he has the capacity to pick up whatever, just not for free. That would be an option, for right now, to have his number available to refer people to. He will pick up anything and take it off. I mean maybe consider, I know people don’t want to pay any extra money, but a few more dollars, and bring him on as a sub-contractor to pick up furniture and stuff. Jeff – I mean I could get away from the public work’s side if that’s what’s needed. CM Harrison – I’m not saying that at all. CM Cross – I think it would be wrong to penalize everybody another $5 - $10 a month when it’s not everybody or a majority that has this issue. It would be more if you can’t take it off yourself, we have this gentleman’s name that we know nothing about, but he does this. You can call him yourself and he’s local. CM Harrison- In the interim I will leave his information with Melissa. Jeff – I understand and I brought the issue up before in regards to contractors doing work and leaving the stuff on the side of the road for the city. I’ve had the conversation with someone before about a contractor not having a truck…. CM Harrison – Well I pay my yard guy extra to carry my stuff off. CM Cross – I wish we had a one size cup fits all, but…. Mayor Hill – It’s just not the way it is. CM Harrison – I have one more thing. Ms. Gloria Hudson had a complaint about some branches coming out on the street and she scratched her car on them. She thinks we should take care of her car. Jeff – Where was this? We’ve been using the backhoe and all working to widen back up these roads. CM Harrison – I don’t remember, but I do know that Melissa let the guys know and they got over there and cleaned it up immediately. So I advised she needed to get a police report and file it with her insurance company and they could file or whatever and we would let our attorney handle it.
5. Fire Department – report emailed monthly – Chief Childs

Council/Committee Reports:

1. Mayor Hill – no report
2. Human Resources/Finance – CM Coogle - absent
3. Public Safety – CM Cross – no report
4. Utilities/Streets/Cemetery – CM Harrison – see above under Jeff – bids going out tomorrow for Anna Drive.
5. Planning & Recreation – for Veterans Day we have two speakers. Both are Veterans. The Veterans Dept is sending someone again. The only thing I need help with, Leisa could you get that lady to come sing the “Star Spangled Banner”? CM Cross – I will contact her. The Color Guard is going to come as well. It’s being advertised as Veteran’s Celebration and Open House. The open house will start at 11am and the program at 12pm. We are having food stuff as well right? CM Cross – Yes, we had about $400 left from last year and if you’ll allow me, I will get the food and all. CM Harrison – I don’t mind helping, too. CM Cross – I’m just going to buy stuff and set it out. Get a cake, some cheese, and stuff like that. How many do you want to feed? CM Harrison – We can make it a little more robust than that because we already have our $1K dollars from Flint Energies. CM Cross – I thought we could use that for table cloths and decorations, etc. What expenses do you already have? CM Harrison – The only expense that I have is the printed stuff and that won’t be a whole lot (programs and certificates). But I do want to give the first 50 Veterans that register a flag and I found a vendor where we can get the American Flag with the grommets on it so that they can put it on a pole for $7 each, so that would be about $400 with tax and all. CM Cross – Ok, just tell me how much I can spend on food. CM Harrison – Ok, I will get a budget for you. The lady that’s coming from Lagrange just wanted gas money. CM Cross – Just give me an idea of how many to plan for. CM Harrison – I’m thinking about 100. The program from 12pm-2pm and a gospel sing from 3pm-5pm. The building could be open from 11am – 3pm. We will start registering this weekend. I will put my number, Leisa’s, and of course City Halls. I will ask the garden club if they could come help with decorations like they did last year. Ms. Susan also helped last year.

CM Mahone – Playground equipment needs to be pressure washed. The boards need to be fixed. Need some wood chips. Need to replace the boarder before putting wood chips in. I don’t know anyone with cross ties or something. There are nails in the other ones. CM Cross – So are you going to try and get this done before the Veterans Day event? CM Mahone – Before we do anything, we need to try to get that done. Chief Finch – Try to contact Michael Cox because the railroad has a lot of cross ties over by the old big bank in Montezuma. CM Cross – Cassandra might have his number because he’s Matt’s cousin. CM Mahone – Going to need some kind of transportation for them, too. CM Cross – I know somebody who pressure washes, who could probably get the pressure washing done, but we have to think about how much we are going to pay for that to be done because we are not going to meet again before that. CM Mahone – Where do those funds come out of? CM Cross – There’s still money in ARPA. CM Harrison – I don’t remember how much. CM Cross – It’s on the report she sent. CM Mahone – Everything out there could fall under ARPA? CM Cross – It could, yes. CM Mahone – So we have to get bids? CM Cross – No, we could do it as an emergency as we need it done quickly. We just decide how much we want to pay. CM Mahone – We just have to bring in the mulch and put the boarder around. Got to get rid of the old wood chips. CM Cross – Seems like the inmates could get those up for us if Melissa called them. CM Mahone – At this point it would be better with just nothing there. CM Cross – Yes, if we could get the boards up and get the equipment pressure washed before Veteran’s Day, that would be at least safe. CM Mahone – Might could use the guy that did the wall over by the school. CM Cross – Just have to make sure he’s insured. CM Mahone – I think he is. CM Cross – Tommy just had someone pressure wash, but it was a big company. Michael you did see that we still own that building by the playground? CM Mahone – yes, I need to get the key. I looked in there from the outside and it’s literally (can’t understand). It could be utilized for something. CM Cross – It could be spectacular because it has bathrooms and everything. It could be rented out for a birthday party or anything to where they didn’t have to bother the police dept or anything. CM Mahone – Could board that whole side up with the windows and that’s it. Just because the view itself isn’t anything. CM Cross – but we could really do some rentals in it. CM Harrison – When you go in, could you take pictures? CM Mahone – I have to get the key. CM Cross – I had said something about going to look at the wall, but I need to get in touch with Cindy during business hours. CM Mahone – (can’t understand). CM Harrison – Are we talking about the band room? CM Mahone – it was IT, Ag, etc. The bathrooms are right up front.

New Business:

1) Council Member Meeting Attendance – CM Harrison – I want us to consider putting into the charter that no more than 3 absences in a year for Regular Council Meetings. I think that is reasonable. We need people that

are going to be here and be committed to not missing meetings. What do ya’ll think about that? CM Mahone – It says something in the charter and it said something about the second. In that package they give you when

you come in as council, it has some of it and they don’t give you everything, they don’t give you the entire charter so you don’t know what it actually states. CM Harrison – I just go online to review the charter. CM

Mahone – I’ve seen it before where it talked about… CM Harrison – I know that we covered it when we went to training. CM Cross – I think it should be for work sessions, too. CM Harrison – I think they are both

important. CM Cross – That’s just my opinion. With that being said, I won’t be here next week as my mother is having surgery. CM Mahone – Well, I was out last week for an officer’s funeral. CM Harrison – I remember

that. I just think it is something we should talk about and pursue. We have to go through procedures and not something that we just make up and update the charter. We need to set the precedence now in going forward.

CM Cross – Might be something for the new council. CM Harrison – Perhaps or towards the end of the year.

2) Police Chief Applications – CM Cross – We have gotten just over 30. Some are people with no law enforcement people at all. Melissa gave me around 31 to look at and anyone that didn’t have at least a year of

experience, I excluded. Job hoppers as I call them, those who work a couple of months here and then a couple of months there, I excluded from the pile. I’ve gotten down to 11 and it’s very clear that some are out of

Lakeland FL, Fulton Co… they are making more than they make with us, but I will send out an email next week that says the salary is between $47K and $55K, we want you to live within 35 miles of the city, and if you

are still interested, please respond within 5 days. Then see if we get any responses. CM Harrison – But the ad is still running? CM Cross – Yes, the ad is still up and running.

3) Year End Celebration for Employees and Volunteers – CM Cross – I’d like to do it a little bit differently this year. The Fire Dept in year’s past have such a weird schedule. Maybe do theirs on a Tuesday night at like one

of their regular meetings. Then Jeff’s guys need a little something and the ladies need a little something, and then the police guys. It could be that we do several little lunch things. Take the ladies out to lunch. The police

officers, we will buy all of you lunch if you show up at Oasis on certain date/time. Maybe it’s a gift card for lunch? I’m just trying to figure something out a little different. I feel like last year was a little difficult to me

because like the ladies had to work all day and then show up for the dinner. CM Harrison – I can’t even remember. CM Cross – We did like bbq and stuff. CM Harrison – Oh yeah, I remember now. CM Cross – So it

was better than the year before where we like just threw something together at the last minute. Chief Finch, you got any ideas? Chief Finch – Let me tell you what the problem is. When there’s this consolidation right

now, but I’m just going to tell you the issue with that with what me and Captain Hill were expressing, I just want to say that, with some of that stuff they are doing over there; well basically we have a wellness program

over there (Montezuma) basically they get their physicals and we give them $1K. Because if you ain’t got healthy employees, then you going to be paying a whole bunch of city bills. While I’m their chief right now, our

other staff just got $1K and Avery and Whitehead did not. I just feel that that’s… I mean I don’t know what to tell them because the other guys are running around with a $1K check. CM Cross – They are going to get a

year end incentive. It was already approved in the budget. Chief Finch – I just want to be able to tell them something because I know for fact Whitehead putting in a lot of work and Avery too and they going to make y’all

some good cops. I’m just saying. CM Cross – Like I said they will be getting something, but it won’t be a $1K as it was already put in the budget. Chief Finch – Just as long as they get something. I’m just bringing it up

because the others all got something. I would be less of a chief if I didn’t fight for them. CM Cross – Well yes they do get something and Avery’s will be pro-rated as he hasn’t been here that long. CM Harrison – So

basically Leisa, you are suggesting 3 different events? CM Cross – I don’t know what y’all think? I mean do we buy food and let them cook it, etc. I just think for the daytime staff it would be better to do theirs during

the day. CM Harrison – When we did it at the church did the ladies come? CM Cross – Yes, but it was mostly the guys – fire dept – that made up most of it and the inmates. CM Harrison – What do you think Mike?

How do you all handle it where you work? CM Mahone – We have a luncheon within the dept. CM Harrison – I know when I worked corporate, they cut out the big Christmas Dinners and everyone did their own dept.

CM Cross – That’s what I’m thinking. Those of us who can meet up with them and maybe take the ladies out to lunch one day. CM Harrison – I would like that. CM Cross – Then the Fire Dept we could ask them what

day they want to do something and advise we have this much money to spend… we can bring y’all pizza or something. CM Harrison – For the Police and Fire Dept, I think that would be cool because Jeff and the guys

don’t live in this area. They won’t want to stay. CM Cross – We could maybe just meet them for lunch one day. CM Harrison – Yes. I will handle the guys, you and I can handle the ladies, and for the Fire Dept and

Police Dept I would like to do something about this time. CM Cross – But I would like to do something for them separately as they are two separate departments. CM Harrison – Ok so let’s look at dates for the evening

situation. I’m tied up on the 6th and 8th and we have a meeting on the 7th so that’s out. CM Cross – How about the 2nd Tuesday (Dec 12th) for the Fire Dept? CM Harrison – Ok. CM Cross – And then we will see when

Finch wants to do something for the Police Dept. CM Harrison – Remember the 1st is the Oglethorpe Christmas Parade and Festival. CM Cross – We can talk with Chief Childs about the Fire Dept and we then we can

talk to the ladies about taking them out to lunch one day.

4) **Preliminary** 2024 Financial Budget – Recap Sheet provided for review. Please write down any questions on the back of this sheet and Melissa will pick up and get answers. Also, back-up reports for the numbers is

located in our office for review. CM Cross – Melissa I am going to take mine home and look at it. Then I will send my questions back to you. CM Harrison – The main highlight is page 5 – The water and sewer revenue

is around the $600K mark which is up about $200K which is nothing to sneeze at. CM Cross – I’m sure a lot of that had to do with getting all of those meters replaced. CM Harrison – Yes, and then at the end of the

summary we are projected to be at a deficit of $480K which is $270K difference, but a bulk of that $480K is because they budgeted $300K to take care of our IRS situation which is still not defined. They still haven’t

given us an answer as to the settlement that we requested. So to be safe, they put aside $300K for the IRS which is noted on page 3. Because we have the overage in water/sewer, that will balance us out and we won’t be

in the red. If the IRS is kind and doesn’t take the whole amount, then that will be more to add to our bottom line. She said that anything you have a question on, they have the records to back up the numbers. Just let them

know if there is something you want to see, just come in and talk with her and Ms. Jean. They will be more than glad to answer anything for you. They just wanted to put this summary together for us so that we know

where we are. We are still better than we were last year.

Old Business:

1) Trash Pick Up – CM Harrison – already talked about

2) BRACE Grant Update – CM Cross – We got it! I was notified that we will received the $5K and we have to spend it in March. If not, we have to send it back in April. If you want me to come back to help with it, I would

be more than happy to. One week I will be in Clearwater in March, but other than that I’m available. I have a lay out for it all that I will give Melissa for you all. CM Harrison – Thank you Leisa, that is great.

3) Grand Reopening of the Police Dept/Business Center – CM Cross – already talked about.

Other Business:

1) CDBG Grant – CM Harrison – I spoke with Ms. Kurtz and she and her husband are interested in taking this administration of the grant over. I have a call scheduled with them next week. She said that there is someone that we have to reach out to and advise. I have his number and will reach out to him if that is ok with you all.

Adjourn: 7:05 CM Cross, 2nd CM Harrison, AIF