CITY OF OGLETHORPE

OGLETHORPE CITY HALL

115 CHATHAM STREET

COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

JANUARY 26, 2023 – 6:00PM

Call to order: Mayor Hill 6:00PM

Department Head Reports

1. City Clerk, Melissa Jones – report emailed to council prior to meeting.
2. Police Dept – Cindy Kleckley - report given out at meeting / Interim Chief Finch – I sent out an email to you last night so that everyone was aware of the issue with an inmate running from the sheriff’s dept during transport to court yesterday. He was caught with the help of all of us without incident at Carla Drive. We have a new officer (Moses) in the academy. He started on the 11th. Officer Whitehead will be on his own soon. Computer Court Systems – we put links in on our computers for the officers so they can directly link their reports to go to the server. Takes pressure off of Ms. Cindy. Will send out goals and objectives this afternoon to your email. I wrote a grant from Weyerhauser and got a speed trailer on North Dooly St. (Montezuma). This will give us direct information of how fast and what time the speeding is going on. We are testing it right now. Can be used for events, construction, etc. CM Cross – It’s not one that issues tickets? Chief Finch – No, it does not issue tickets. But to answer that, I sent ya’ll an email on Flock and the city of Montezuma is going to go ahead and put out 20 Flock Cameras around Montezuma. I talked to the salesman and he assured me that the Flock Cameras can alert the officers in their cars and to help generate the tickets. CM Cross – It was about $60K for Oglethorpe? Chief Finch – That’s for the first 2 years. CM Cross – Might be good use of ARPA money. Chief Finch – We are looking at infrastructure for Oglethorpe and Montezuma through ways so we will know what’s going on in our cities. From ring cameras we were able to get some photos for recent break ins in Montezuma… so. CM Cross – So what about the tag reader that we have? Is it not being utilized? Chief Finch – That’s something we are working with Josh on. CM Cross – I’m just wondering based on the numbers if we need the part time guy running it? Chief Finch – I’m going to be honest with you, I had a meeting with Ms. Cindy and them yesterday about that. The reports you have shows what everybody is doing. Even though Officer Dunzant is giving out those tickets, there have been warnings given out as well. I don’t want my officer issuing tickets every time they stop a car. But I also understand that every officer just isn’t a ticket writer and so I have to figure out what each officer is. When you aren’t bringing nothing to the team, you have to go. Captain Hill has already done evaluations on officers.
3. Librarian, Glenda Rigby – report to be emailed at first of the month
4. Water/Sewer/Streets, HWR Jeff Harrison – Met with ARPA group on how to complete pay requests etc on the 10th. Mr. Ingram came over today and met with me in regards to the mats at the waste water pond. I would like to cut the costs on the project and I would like to try using algicide in place of the mats. We would have to test it out and it would run about $1000.00. We would treat the dead section of the waste water pond. See if it kills the algae. That’s all the mats are doing is keeping the algae under control. If it works, we can buy 55gallon drum of the algicide and have it dumped right into the lift station and it will pump through the pond and keep the algae under control. The 55gallon drum costs about $4,000.00 and you are looking at about 3 a year. So, $12,000 a year and ten years that’s just $120K. CM Cross – saving us money. Jeff – The mats were half a million when they were quoted to me, they are closer to one million dollars now because they are plastic and that’s tied to oil cost rising. CM Cross – Will we need to vote for you to be able to purchase that? Jeff – yes, I will have a conference call on Monday with the manufacturer of the algicide to get specs and all on how to dispurse it in the pond, then we will come in and do a test. CM Cross – So that needs to be an agenda item for next week so we can get it voted on for you. Jeff – I did quotes on lawn mowers. Whitts Outdoors sales BobCats $8999.00 – $11669.00. Skagg in Macon the Tiger Cat 2 lowest cost was $10595.00- $10895.00, Jacks - $8800.00 - $10300.00 (heavy duty deck), and Carson $7291.00 - $8651.00 (like what we have in the back). Both have 2 tanks with 54” cuts. But before we do that, I’ve subcontracted the cemetery work out for this next season. I’m going to try somebody. That takes a load off the city and your equipment. If it doesn’t work out, we have the numbers. If it does, then there is no extra cost to the city at all as I’m paying for that. The company approached me and we will see how it works. This might give us another 2 years on the mowers you currently have. The Georgia EPD inspected the booster station and everything is good on that. The well that ya’ll have at the Prison (#103) is a small well. It has not run in I don’t know how long. EPD standards, if it isn’t run for 3 years straight, it has to be source approved or permanently capped. My view on permanently capping it is – the well does pump. Per Mr. Ingram it was pumping 600 gallons per minute and then it went to 250 gallons per minute and ya’ll had a lot of work done to it. Had it cleaned, had the screens cleaned, it went back to 500 gallons per minute, then it dropped back down to 250 gallons per minute. So, it’s probably sand getting in the bottom of the screen. If you cap it, it’s gone for good. If you source approve it and get it opened back up, I can run it once a month and just let it run out on the ground… it can be turned in on monthly reports as showing still active. This way you have a back up if something happens to your big well or the booster station. Source approval is about $3000.00. That would need to be voted and approved to request the source approval. CM Cross – I don’t think it should be capped off. CM Mahone – I agree it doesn’t need to be capped off. CM Cross – Yes, it would cost a lot more than that to drill a new well. Jeff – we’re continuing to change out and put in new meters. About 100 left to do. A lot of rain lately. We increased consumption. Last month 72 and this month 74, so that’s a good thing. CM Daniels – Water and Cemetery, how long’s the contract for now/ what’s the terms? Jeff – It’s a yearly contract and if it doesn’t work out, it doesn’t cost you anything. CM Cross – And that’s perfectly legal. Jeff – Yes and a couple of other things. It frees the guys up to keep the city clean. They are staying on top of trash and limbs. When that cemetery is going – I have one guy out there and that’s all he does. This guy I contract to, he brings his weed eaters, mowers, etc. I made sure this guy understands that the city is very particular about their cemetery and he said he understood. The guys is from Taylor County. CM Daniels – I wish I had known you were going to sub-contract because I had someone in mind. Jeff – This guy actually approached me and he’s also cutting another town that I work with. Gave me a really good price and I was like, “I can’t do it for that”. I even had him go home and crush numbers, a budget. He called me two weeks later and said he could do it. CM Cross – If it doesn’t work out, looks like Jimmy might have someone for you to try. CM Daniels – I’ve had a couple of people to ask. Jeff – I’m more than happy to sub out as it takes a lot off my guys. CM Daniels – They really have been doing a good job. I stopped and bought them lunch one day. They were getting the sidewalls cleaned up. (edging). Jeff – I might be losing PJ to the military. He’s going down next week to MEPS. I may have him a couple more months. CM Cross – How’s it going with “other” items being brought to the dumpster? Jeff – I would have to call Cole and ask. He’s the one that works down here all the time. But yet, they are more than welcome to bring loads of trash to the dumpster. CM Cross – So the one thing I’ve had push back on is on the weekends they cannot get in there because it’s locked. Can you just think of an alternate site might be that they can dump at? Then have the backhoe pick up later? Jeff – To be honest, you all need to think about where you want to use as an alternate because that’s trash being left on the ground. Jeff – Per the policy, if they would call here and say they have a recliner or something then the person could contact Melissa and she could contact the garbage contractor to pick up. CM Cross – I spoke to Melissa about that and the contractor will not pick up recliners and things like that which are not in the garbage can – that was miscommunicated. And of course we don’t have a landfill so that’s why we’re having pushback. Anonymous Person stated the landfill has opened back up. Jeff – Where? Anonymous Person – The one in Macon County. It’s $65 per ton. CM Cross – Ok, we need to let Melissa know that so they can take their own trash to the landfill.
5. Fire Department – report emailed to council prior to meeting

Council/Committee Reports

1. Mayor Hill – I want to go over the ordinances. That’s why I have a couple of people here. Mr. Parrott tell people what you do. David Parrott – I am the zoning administrator for Macon Co. I’m the secretary full time, public view of the zoning board, I help in the ordinances to transfer info from the board to the Board of Commissioners. I gather information, etc. Mayor Hill – We talked earlier today about ordinances for the city of Oglethorpe. We don’t have any ordinances right now for fences, so you can build a fence however you want right now. We have one downtown that’s 12-14 feet and everyone is complaining about it. I’ve decided that we need to look at some ordinances to regulate fences in the city. David Parrott – There are some overlays I’ve seen in municipalities for like historical areas, etc. What the Mayor and I talked about is the main drag in the city. Oglethorpe still wants to keep that “look” of The City of Oglethorpe… charm, etc. The fence was one of the things that’s outside the norm. What could be done is to look at the zoning ordinance and add restrictions. There will some opinions. Zoning is meant to be put together is “here we are and there is where we want to go”. You have to figure out what you and where you want the details/restricting/direction. You don’t have to change the entire ordinance you can add overlays. You can change looks. CM Cross – So in the future, with the fence we are referencing, last meeting I brought up that the fence crossed a city alley and so it should have never gone up there. David Parrott – Yes, I’ve had multiple property owners come talk to me about fences. I have always said fences should not be permitted if there is a question on it. For example, fences are sometimes used as property lines. I do not have the ability to state this is their property line. A surveyor can do that. When that fence was put up, we still have the “who’s property line”. If they crossed the line without looking at the plat and are on city property that needs to be researched by your city attorney. CM Cross – Yes, Jon was supposed to be here. David Parrott – In the aspect of zoning, you can restrict size, height, accessibility, material, etc. I did show that individual where the property line was and they did it anyway. CM Mahone – The issue is with the fence, is it because they hiding their house, or is it because of the alley way? David Parrott – You can’t go back and do anything about a fence because there was no ordinance to begin with, but you can have something done in regards to the fence being over the property line and in the alley way as they were advised. It needs to be surveyed. You can’t go back and fine for the fence being what it is, but you can do something about the alleyway.
2. Human Resources/Finance – CM Coogle - absent
3. Public Safety – CM Cross – I just wanted to talk a little bit about the camera’s that Montezuma is doing. This would be $60K for 2 years. That’s the initial purchase and service for monitoring. This is less than an officer would cost us. Crime is spilling over from Albany to Americus and it’s the youth. It might be a good thing to invest in for the security of our town. CM Mahone – Other cities already have them and it monitors when you don’t have the man power. Prison has them already as well. It’s the new wave. Chief Finch – Americus has had a shooting every night for the last 30 days. We right here in the middle of all of these cities and we need to start protecting our cities. Warner Robins is now trying to take back their city with these cameras. I hate that we have to do these things, but I’m just being real with you. CM Cross – And sometimes we don’t have an officer on duty in Oglethorpe. Chief Finch – The camera system will notify you if a car doesn’t have a tag or something. You can go back in the system prior to an incident and see what was going on. I’m going to do the same work over there as I do over here. Every camera is $2500. CM Cross – We can use ARPA money to take care of. Chief Finch – We going to have 20 in Montezuma. For Oglethorpe you only need 11 to cover incoming/outgoing roads, parks, etc. CM Daniels – I stay up to date with everything going on in the county and we need to make sure that we are prepared as well. Mayor Hill – I feel like camera’s don’t lie. No matter how many people you interview, you might get different stories. CM Cross – When is Montezuma starting? Chief Finch – still in negotiations. We are trying to see how we can make revenue off of it to cover the purchase of these cameras. CM Daniels – So when you say revenue, like I got a ticket in Atlanta and they mailed me a ticket. Is that what you’re talking about? Chief Finch – What you’re talking about is the Red Dot. They are mainly in the school zones. I wanted to get those in the school zones, but I’m not the chief for the schools. Chief Duncan is and he’s not in favor of putting up a camera system in the school zone. And for it to happen the superintendent would also have to sign off on it. Some complaints are that when school is in from 8-4, you would get citations the whole time… not just during the morning and afternoons. CM Daniels – to that though, a school zone is a school zone. Chief Finch – True, but that’s the downside to having those type cameras. CM Coogle – One of the cameras that you’re proposing would be near the school correct? Chief Finch – yes in that area. CM Coogle – so just from our discussion with the 3 council that are here, we can’t vote, but we could go ahead and let Montezuma know that we are in favor of the cameras. Is that a true statement? Mayor Hill – yes. Chief Finch – once we get more information on them, I will let you know. I sent an email so I’m transparent with what I’m working on. CM Cross- just make sure you let us know when we need to vote on it. Question from Guest – How do you propose to generate funds? Chief Finch – The camera system can advise if a car doesn’t have insurance, or is stolen, or the person the car belongs to doesn’t have a license. Guest – so someone will be constantly monitoring the camera. Chief Finch – It will go to the lap top in their car. CM Cross – it will help cut down on some of the bad stuff coming into our area. Chief Finch- I look at technology and do a whole lot of research. We have a lot of businesses coming to Macon Co. and these cameras give security. Doctor’s Pharmacy for instance, has had two robberies. If we had had the camera system, it would have taken a lot less money to find the suspects. The GBI has come by and said that there’s a gang moving through Georgia that’s shattering windows and robbing people. They crawl in and crawl back out. Your alarm system is connected to your door so they are making it through. We identified 21 suspects within the state of Georgia with the DA. If we had a camera system that day, we would have been able to lock in the vehicles involved. Warner Robins, Centerville, and Houston Co have approved getting theirs.
4. Utilities/Streets/Cemetery – CM Harrison - absent
5. Planning & Recreation – CM Daniels, Jr.

New Business

1) Ordinances – DDA (Jon Coogle, David Parrott) CM Cross - I heard what David said, but I don’t think we can go to that extent and still have people want to move here. More or less to say you have to have a wrought

iron fence, or you can’t paint your house a certain color. I don’t like the height of the fence, I think it distracts, but it could be something easy like if you put up a front yard fence – it has to be a chain link fence. My main

concern is that it crossed property lines in the back. Kenny Welch – If I could add to the conversation, DDA a couple of years ago drew out the parameters for a historical district. Part of that process is you have to have a

historical district committee of 5 people that will sit down and line out what you can and can’t do within that historical district. CM Cross – Do we have 5 people? Kenny Welch – no. The council can say yes, we agree

with your parameters, here’s the map, what you have is going to be within these parameters. The committee is who you will have to talk to if you’re going to put up a fence. If I want to put up a wood fence over on

Randolph Street, according to the stipulations set forth in the historic district, you have to have both meetings on and you have to have council agree to those stipulations, then no you can’t put up a wood fence, it has to be

wrought iron or chain link. Now what you thinking folks are going to do? Saturday morning, they are going to Lowe’s to buy a bunch of lumber to put up a wooden fence because you aren’t going to tell me what to do

with my property. That’s one instance of ordinance and what you run in to. Ordinances and laws are protecting you from yourself. Now these people up here probably had a good idea, “I’m going to put a fence up to keep

my children inside”. Now the first time they have an incident – EMS, Fire, whatever you can’t get into the house. There is no exterior gate on that fence. CM Cross – There is one on the backside. It’s on the inside. We

stopped and looked because so many people are complaining. Kenny Welch – having an ordinance about the kind of fence, entry, exit, the size of the gate. Where it needs to be so you can access it from the outside. At

3AM you have call up there and EMS don’t know how to get in there. CM Cross – I think we do need some type of ordinances, just not so strict. Kenny Welch – If you can nail down an ordinance officer who can go

around and say…… I can pile up 5 junk cars in my front yard and there’s nothing you can do about it. CM Cross – I’ve been running some figures myself and trying to figure out how to pay an ordinance person. Not sure

how we could do it, but maybe someone part time. Kenny Welch – you have to get your ordinances in order also. CM Cross – Parrott is not our ordinance officer. Chief Finch – It goes back to what the Mayor and I talked

about before. Had an issue, advised the property owner and gave them 10 days – by the time over with the judge advised the city to clean it up and it cost the city $25K. You have to have the tools to back up your

ordinances. Sometimes the city ends up eating the costs. (group talking over each other). Kenny Welch – for the town as a whole, you have to have some control over what people do on their property, you are putting the

entire community at risk. If my child comes out and walks into your yard and gets hurt, I can name all of the council, etc. in a lawsuit. What about safety hazards – mice, roaches, snakes, etc. Madison Porter – we have

zoning in place, already right? CM Cross – yes, we do. Madison Porter – if you have “x” number of cars in your yard – that could be a start. CM Cross – That’s the issue is affording an enforcer. Jimmy Bray worked on

it for a while and kind of tasked me with moving forward. We have no animal control ordinances. Chief Finch – We used to pick up animals and take them to the vet’s office. If they weren’t picked up in 3 days, they were

euthanized. We would pick them up from the vet and go bury them. People found out and put the heat on us. So, we had to stop doing that. We had a truck and an officer. We proposed to the county to have full time

animal control in Macon Co. The problem is we don’t have anywhere to house them. I called multiple counties to see if they would house our dogs. They all said no. We have talked to the humane society and that’s a no

go. That’s why we don’t have animal control because we have nowhere to place them. Steven Harris – so what if we have a stray dog that bites a kid. Costs $50K in medical. Chief Finch – What we try to do is find the

dog. If aggressive, we have to put the dog down. I’m not going to lock someone up for protecting their family. We have presented this to the county with a budget and saying this is what we need to do. CM Cross – So

you are saying that if we have a neighbor and we know their dog is not tagged, we can call the police dept to write a ticket? Chief Finch – yes. CM Cross – I would like to propose maybe have some citizens work with

council to work on ordinances at some of the suggestions and bring them back in reference to fencing and possibly a work group on how we can enforce it, etc. Getting citizens involved to forma committee to look at it.

Maybe the DDA has someone they can put on it as well. Mayor Hill – I think that’s a good idea.

Old Business

1) Discussion of budget amount for Mayor and Council education. Currently $2,500.00 total. – CM Daniels – Just to be honest, the last class that was had, Oglethorpe was the only one that didn’t go. We should send someone for us and bring back the information to keep us up to date with things. CM Cross – What did it cost for you to go Mayor Hill? CM Daniels – Jill’s was about $1000.00. And that didn’t include a place to stay. CM Cross this is for about 2 a year and the mayor. CM Mahone – I’d say you’re looking at $1500-$1800. Chief Finch – ya’ll need training. What you need to do is get with Ms. Melissa and let her get with other cities about this size and see what they budget and use for training. CM Daniels – just table for now. Like I said, I spoke with other people and they were like Oglethorpe wasn’t there.

Other Business

Mayor Hill – Per Jon Coogle, we can’t go into Executive Session. CM Cross – He’s the one that put the Executive Session on the Agenda. Chief Finch – There is information that the council really needs to know, so maybe talk about it next Thursday in Executive Session. CM Cross – Why did Jon say we couldn’t go into Executive Session? Chief Finch – He has to be present.

Kenny Welch – Who is going to be in charge of putting the committee together for ordinances? CM Cross – I will if I need to be.

Adjourn: Motion made by CM Cross, 2nd by CM Daniels, AIF