



CITY OF LITHONIA
MINUTES—CITY COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETING
Tuesday, January 18, 2022 @ 5:30 PM

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The City Council Virtual Meeting was called to order at 5:33 pm by Mayor Shameka S. Reynolds. A roll call was taken, and the following City Council Members were present: Diane Howard, Darold Honore, Amelia Inman, Vanneriah Wynn, and Yolanda Sheppard.

II. Moment of Silence

A moment of silence was observed.

III. Approval of Agenda

Councilwoman Inman motioned to approve the Work Session meeting agenda for Tuesday, January 18, 2022; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Sheppard and approved by a vote of 5-0.

IV. Public Comments (Limit 2-minutes per person)

- a. Allene Harper (Resident Braswell Street), concerned about the home on her street that was addressed with code enforcement. Mayor Reynolds acknowledged that Officer Roseberry was not on the line, Mrs. Harper will reach out to Officer Roseberry by phone.

V. Presentation

There were no presentations.

VI. Action Item

a. COPS Grant

Councilwoman Inman motioned to enter into discussion on the COPS Grant, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Sheppard.

Councilwoman Inman would like to know what other councilmembers thoughts are, concern was whether we can forecast and handle the repayment over the 3-year period. Councilwoman Howard did some research on statistics/ratios, 8 officers is a lot, currently at 5 officers for a total of 13 if the 8 officers are needed, how many needed in a town of 2,300 people at 1.5 per 1,000 people, also based on crime statistics which does not show a high rate and feels the city is not crime ridden, 5 officers should be sufficient to monitor the city, 8 officers is too much for the city, finance also plays a factor, the funds just are not there.

Mayor Reynolds indicated that in various meetings council stated there was a need for more officers on every shift to cover the entire Lithonia area and to be mindful, former Major Ferguson took this in consideration and provided all the calculations when preparing the grant, in favor of hiring an additional 8 officers.

Councilwoman Howard asked how many officers the city has currently and asked if the city can see officer presence in the city, more visibility on the street is needed. Chief Pollard confirmed there to be a total of 7 officers to include code enforcement, he needs 2 officers per shift, the grant would allow for 3 officers per shift to include a supervisor, reserves are assigned to help out, 4 12-hour shifts, one for CID, community involvement, and patrolling in different facets.

Major Dejarnette covered crime concerns in the area, domestic calls are still major, although nothing major over the past 2 weeks, Parc Chateau is having issues late at night and have curtailed it a little bit, difficult with just one officer, issues with street racing on Fargo Lane and working with Dekalb over the past weekend because they are shorthanded, spoke to Ms. Wynn regarding the complaint on Smokey Row which has been taken care of, other than that nothing major to

report, disputes on Johnson and Council.

Chief Pollard stated they are looking at being more proactive for the future of the city. Spoke to DOJJ, parameters can be set within the 3-year period to exhaust the funds by the end of the 3rd year period.

Councilman Honore, upon reviewing the information, entry level salaries for officers from the police academy, who will maintain all the filing, funds must be available that are not budgeted funds. Feels that Lithonia does not have the reserve funding available, concern expressed on whether a supervisor works the night shift, a commitment of a 5-year hiring requirement, council has not seen the application that was submitted, nor is the application accessible within the software.

Chief Pollard confirmed that all officers would be entry-level with the city, salary numbers were presented on the application, set at \$37,200, citation revenue with new officers assigned would increase.

Councilwoman Inman upon reviewing the documents, wording is very specific, who will oversee the funding monthly. Administrator Sands indicated the City Accountant would handle the monthly reporting. How many cities will receive the grant award, pollard 1-2 others in the state at the most.

Councilwoman Wynn concern reached out to the accountant about the finances, city does not have the funds, what happens when something comes up that may involve SPLOST funds, the health and liability insurance is not included, city would be responsible for 3 years to follow the end of the grant award, something needs to be in place to secure the debt the city will take on.

Councilwoman Sheppard had an opportunity to speak with the chief about issues in her neighborhood, speaking as a citizen before councilwoman-we do not have enough officer presence, annexation, number one issue is that we don't see the officers coming from other residents, putting our heads together for a solution, 1 officer per 12-hour shift is not enough.

Councilwoman Howard motioned to table the COPS Grant until another meeting is scheduled, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Sheppard and approved by a vote of 5-0.

b. 2022 LMIG Project

Administrator Sands stated that public works provided an update of pending project items remaining and the remaining balance is \$184,877.77, requesting councils' permission to enter into the 2022 projects.

Councilwoman Howard motioned to approve the 2021 LMIG project listing to the 2022 projects remaining, the motion was seconded by Councilman Honore and approved by a vote of 5-0.

VII. New Business

a. Traffic Detail – Major Dejarnette

The topic of incentives for retention was brought up in discussion by council, compared to other cities of the same population, Major Dejarnette proposed a traffic detail program in the Lithonia community. There are currently infrastructure improvements going on for the next 2-7 years, traffic company sets up lane closure, they will be in our city and the outskirts to include the east dekalb precinct area for a minimum of 3-5 years. Talked to the traffic detail company that would cover the Lithonia Industrial, Dekalb Medical, and Evans Mill areas and offer \$25 per day per officer and car, liability is minimal. Asking if council can approve for existing and new officers. Councilwoman Sheppard no questions or concerns, Councilwoman Wynn sounds like a good plan,

Councilwoman Inman very creative idea, would love to know if other items can be looked into, Councilman Honore asked how many cars are active at this time, Major indicated that normally 3 cars are just sitting with another car waiting on a part for repair. Councilwoman Howard for clarification asked what the cost offered by the traffic detail company would be.

b. 2022 Holiday Schedule

City Administrator Sands compared other city paid holiday's, asking council to amend the current policy to include the proposed holidays of the listing provided to council, additionally Veteran's Day, Juneteenth, and Christmas Eve.

c. Speed Limit Reduction Ordinance

Councilwoman Howard wants to reduce Max Cleland's speed limit from 35 mph to 30mph, and to erect new signage, otherwise in agreement with everything else. City Clerk Blount provided a first reading, Council is in agreement to increase fines, clarity is needed on the current fees and will be provided to council the following day.

d. Truck Route Access Ordinance

Councilwoman Howard commercial truck free other than those doing business in the city, truck stop on center street hoping, any truck stops must exit away from the city, fine amount should be increased as well. Councilman Honore is in favor. Councilwoman Inman is in favor, and for the entire city, signage should be large. Councilwoman Wynn is in favor, trucks should exit onto Rogers Lake and Lithonia Industrial, also when businesses are expanding recommending, they come before council before doing so, additional health reasons are an issue that should be addressed in the future. Councilwoman Sheppard is in favor.

e. Moratorium on Automobile/Truck Services and Repair

Councilwoman Howard is suggesting a moratorium on these types of businesses for repairs, services, and parking. Councilman Honore is in favor, no licenses should be issued to new businesses or change of use, a zoning hearing required if the business license is not obtained in 6-months. Councilwoman Inman overall good with moving forward. Councilwoman Wynn is in favor. Councilwoman Sheppard is in favor. Mayor Reynolds confirmed that all New Business Items will return to February's agenda as an action item.

VIII. Old Business

a. Stormwater Truck

City Administrator Sands is meeting with Lowes Engineering the following day to discuss all projects needing to be completed.

b. Masonic Lodge Repairs

City Administrator Sands indicated that Public Works Director Monson will provide quotes during the next council meeting for outlet installation, one quote of \$7,800 was submitted thus far. Councilwoman Howard indicated that she would meet with Historic Preservation tomorrow to discuss ideas on obtaining funding.

c. Park Hours and Management

City Administrator Sands stated the clerk's office has received several applicant inquiries and asked council if this item should return to the agenda. Councilman Honore stated that park hours should return to dawn to dusk for park activities because of the liability that officers are at risk when mindful of anything that can occur in the dark, revise the contract on the time the park can

be rented, and split the day up for 2-hour rentals. Councilwoman Inman understood the park to close at 11:00pm and to make an exception for summer events. Councilwoman Wynn asked Councilman Honore for clarity on the park hours being open or for events only. Councilwoman Sheppard is in favor and asked if a conversation needs to take place with Dekalb as well. Major Dejarnette indicated that Dekalb has a policy and issuance of a citation, no entry into the park after dark. Councilwoman Howard asked for clarity on the time that an event should end.

IX. Other Business

a. City Administrator Report

A draft copy of the EOS (Extent of Service) for storm water is still under review by the City Attorney and a draft copy will be provided for the next Work Session in February. The City Attorney is working on a draft copy of The Purchasing Policy that will be presented to council during the February Work Session. The City Attorney is drafting an Ordinance for Hotel/Motel Excise Tax for Short Term Rentals, and performing a study, the city must establish an ordinance, fees, and a code section, draft copy will be available in May for July 1 fiscal year. In conversations with Atty Danielle on annexation, all application fees should be waived, recommending the 100% method. African American Cultural Action Fund Grants, deadline to apply May 2nd, a resolution will be drafted on applying for the grant.

b. Police Department Report

Chief Pollard indicated that most of the discussion was geared towards the COPS Grant and Major Dejarnette provided reporting during the meeting on issues that have occurred over the past few weeks, no additional items to report.

c. Mayors Report, Councilmember District Update

Mayor Reynolds thanked everyone for joining the call, all citizens for caring, and thanked council members for a great meeting tonight.

Councilwoman Howard had no additional updates. Councilwoman Inman plugged in the Lithonia Roundtable reminder for Thursday at 5:30pm via zoom and that a reminder will go out, the next quarterly cleanup is on Saturday January 22 from 10 am-12 noon, lunch will be provided. Councilwoman Wynn had no updates. Councilwoman Sheppard requested cleanup flyers from Councilwoman Inman. Councilman Honore provided a report from the LDDA board to announce the new amphitheater manager has been hired and has lots of experience, brought the group Lakeside last year, she has good ideas on events, fines/fees and how to control what happens at the Amphitheater, she will provide a presentation during the February meeting.

VIII. Executive Session (NONE)

Councilman Honore asked Mayor Reynolds and Chief Pollard if they should go into executive session to discuss litigation, Mayor Reynolds concluded this item would be discussed in executive session during February's city council meeting.

IX. Adjournment

Councilwoman Howard motioned to adjourn the meeting, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn; the motion was approved by a vote of 5-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:56 pm.