

Memo

To: City Council
From: Sharon Eveland, City Manager
Date: 6/28/2024
Re: City Manager's Report

Consent Agenda items:

- Resolution 2024-13 – Fee Schedule – This resolution will change the fee schedules for building permits. This change is a result of recent legislation approved by the State specifying just a few ways cities can determine permit fees. We've determined that the flat fee option is the best route for the City at this time. Dave set the fees using the approximate average of the historical permits that have been issued. The State requires cities to have this implemented as of July 1 and we did not have a lot of time to prepare for this so the Council should be prepared for minor tweaks and adjustments over the next year as we learn how this may evolve after implementation.
- Resolution 2024-14 – Voting Delegate for MEAG – This resolution was originally approved last meeting with the Mayor and myself as the delegates but, unfortunately, neither the Mayor nor myself will be able to attend the MEAG conference this year so we need to change the delegates.
- Budget Planning Session – This is to set the date for the Council planning session for October 21st. This is earlier than the Council has historically done this but my goal is to have the budget approved by the end of November. I met with the staff today and went over the calendar and process so they have the pertinent dates already. Additionally, we have included the full budget schedule in the packet as well.

Special exception, tree trimming services, and mill/repave MLK – Respective staff will present on these items during the workshop.

Ordinance 2024-02 – Finance Procedures – As I have mentioned in the past, Brianna and I have been working on significant changes to the procurement policy (draft copy is in the packet). Some of these changes will conflict with certain provisions of the Finance Ordinance. As such, I have prepared an ordinance to amend that section that essentially removes most of the ordinance and replaces it with a statement that simply incorporates the procurement policy. This will allow future changes to the procurement policy without having to go through an ordinance change and it mirrors the section of the Ordinance that deals with Personnel matters (it simply refers to the Personnel Manual). The procurement policy will provide greater flexibility to staff while still providing important guardrails for how we procure goods and services (and still complies with state statutes). The process for this would involve the first reading of the ordinance at the July 1 meeting followed by the second reading/adoption at the July 15th meeting, which would be coupled with approval of the procurement policy so that the ordinance is adopted at the same time the policy is approved. During the workshop, we will review and discuss the

procurement policy from high level so that I can receive your feedback and make adjustments, if necessary.

Recruitment Services – Our recruitment efforts for the DPW position have not been successful. Given that we now have a second department head position (Finance) to fill, I am recommending we hire a firm to do the recruitment for both positions. These are critical positions and having someone with significant connections and networks to shake the proverbial tree would be quite advantageous to the process. Due to time constraints and the need to fill these as soon as possible, I am asking for the Council’s permission to select and negotiate a contract with a firm rather than go through an RFP. I would identify a handful of firms to provide a proposal for these services and finalize a service agreement with the firm I feel will provide the best service. The motion we have proposed for the Council would mean that I would not bring the selected firm back for approval unless the cost is outside of the approved amount. I have used what I feel is a high-end reasonable cost for this service but, given my lack of experience with this in Georgia, I could be off, but this at least sets reasonable parameters given that the Council would be the approval in my hands. It is possible that I could select separate firms for each position but it would likely be more cost effective to do both with the same firm.

Other matters not on the agenda:

- The lift station project bid notice will go out next week and we anticipate asking the Council to award the Contract at the second meeting in August. The final budget estimate is about \$320k higher than the original estimate. The bid opening date will be August 5th. Assuming the project comes in at the new estimate, I would recommend covering the overage by using \$100k of the remaining ARPA funds and then fund balance in the Water/Sewer Fund for the rest. We will evaluate the financials when we have the final cost and provide a funding recommendation during when the Council considers making the award.
- We had a 12” watermain break two weeks ago out near the Bitcoin facility. This was a large break and resulted in over one million gallons of water loss. The watermain was hit by crews from Helton Electric but they did assist city staff with getting the pipe replaced. Alex will provide a report during the work session but the Council should be aware that we are still reviewing the incident to determine the exact cause of the lack of clarity on the location of the pipe. If it is determined that the failure was due to Helton, we will address that with them. If it is with the City, we will take the necessary actions to ensure it does not happen again.
- I originally expected to have a recommendation for the strategic plan consultant at this meeting but have had to delay it due to having overcommitted my time so both the strategic plan and the compensation study recommendations will be ready for the Council’s consideration at the July 15th meeting.
- I attended the GMA Conference and, while it was a nice experience, it will likely only be something that I do every few years. It seems significantly (though understandable) more geared toward elected officials and I feel I would get more out of my state and national professional association conferences. (It is also a pretty expensive event and those funds could be better used elsewhere.) I am grateful for the opportunity to attend and it was nice to be there with some of you call. I have not had an elected body in the past that was engaged in those types of events and I appreciate the time I was able to spend with those of you who attended.
- The budget process has officially kicked off. I met with staff yesterday to discuss the timeline and general process. I am hopeful we will be able to meet the timeline I established and have the Council approve the budget significantly sooner than it has historically done. We’re going to have internal conversations about what we need, from an operational standpoint, to not just continue to provide the same level of services but what we need to improve our service level. I have heard multiple different areas that residents and the Council seem to feel we should do better in and, sometimes, that will require additional funding for technology, equipment, or even staff.

The same goes for our capital needs. My initial review indicates that we need to invest in our facilities. There is only so far we can kick the can and construction costs are only going to go up. A long-term plan likely needs to be developed to address our facilities. Again, those are all conversations that we will be having internally to determine what staff feel is the best, most appropriate use of available funding.

- We will be closing City Hall for 90 minutes on July 12th to hold a going away luncheon for Brianna. (She extended her final date to the 12th, most of that extension will be on vacation, but this will give her a couple extra days with Leslie and the new Assistant Municipal Clerk for training purposes.) We will have the closure posted on the City Hall doors early next week.
- I appreciate those who were previously using personal email addresses working so quickly with IT to have your city email addresses set up. Everyone is now officially on city email accounts!
- We are scheduling a photographer to do headshots of all department heads and senior staff. I am also recommending that each of you take advantage of that as well. My goal is to have a level of uniformity for the official photos of council and staff and to have those photos be more current than some area. There will be a few different sessions and I will let you all know as soon as those dates are set so that you can select which date/time you want to do yours.

Respectfully,
Sharon Eveland, City manager