

**CITY OF TIFTON
COUNCIL WORKSHOP & SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
JANUARY 6, 2025
5:30 PM
TIFTON CITY HALL**

Attendees

Mayor Julie Smith
Vice Mayor Josh Reynolds
Council Member Michael Franks
Council Member M. Jay Hall

Larry Lawrence, Interim City Manager
Jessica White, City Clerk
Rob Wilmot, City Attorney
Elizabeth Torres, Assistant City Attorney

Not Present

Council Member Lester Cromer

Call to Order

Mayor Julie Smith called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Approval of the Agenda

Council Member Reynolds made the first motion for approval of the agenda, motion seconded by Franks, and the agenda was unanimously approved.

Presentations

South Georgia Natural Gas Line Expansion for Economic Development

Matt Seale was present to discuss an economic development dilemma due to the aging natural gas pipeline in South Georgia. He mentioned two pieces of legislation going to the state legislature to benefit natural gas communities. The proposed authority involves 6 communities Douglas, Ocilla, Fitzgerald, Tifton, Ashburn, and Sylvester. This legislation will create an authority to be formed to allow these cities to join together to enhance the natural gas service, by creating an authority to leverage state funding and a seat at the table on the authority. Council Member Franks asked if renovations would be done to the existing line or if a whole new line would be needed. Mr. Seale clarified that it would most likely be renovations to the existing line. Mr. Seale provided a resolution for the Council to consider adopting.

New Business

Discussion of Proposed Increases to Curbside Pickup as Presented by Ryland Environmental

Mayor Julie Smith invited Aaron Sowa with Ryland Environmental to review the proposed changes and increases on curbside pickup. He reviewed the suggested yard debris limits, pile sizes, bulk, and additional costs. The additional costs would also increase the bulk items from 5 items to 10 items. Council Member Michael Franks asked for clarification on the pickup regarding landlord and tenant moveouts. Aaron confirmed that this change would not affect landlord/tenant cleanups. The cost for the increased pickup would be an additional \$3.50 per customer.

Resolution Approving Amendment #5 to the City's Retirement Plan for Appointing the Plan's Trustee

Human Resources Director, Jocelyn Paulk presented to Mayor and Council Amendment #5 to the City's Retirement Plan due to personnel changes. Ms. Paulk mentioned that the Retirement Plan Trustee needs to be updated to reflect personnel changes and staff recommended appointing Ms. Paulk as Trustee.

Resolution Authorizing Submittal of FY2025 LMIG Application for Street Resurfacing Projects

Michael Mitchem with ESG presented a proposed LMIG resurfacing list based on the road condition index. Staff recommended the following 12 Streets for resurfacing: Clay Drive, Clint Drive, Rainwater Road, 12th Street, Belmont Avenue, Ferry Lake Drive, College Avenue, Ridge Avenue, Elm Street, Beech Street, and 42nd Street. Mr. Mitchem mentioned that this would improve Tifton's Roadway System and prolong the life of the roads.

Recommendation for Awarding RFP 2024-12 for FY2025 CHIP Grant Consulting Services

Jessica White, City Clerk, presented a recommendation for applying for CHIP Grant funding for homeowner rehab. She mentioned the City requested proposals from grant administrators and received two responses. Staff recommended awarding the Contract to Grant Specialists of Georgia, Inc.

Resolution Setting the Qualifying Fees for the City's 2025 General Election

Jessica White, City Clerk, presented the qualifying fees set for Municipal Election. The election will be held on November 4, 2025, and the qualifying fee for City Council District 1 and 3 shall be \$207.00. Mrs. White confirmed that the qualifying fee shall be paid at the time a candidate qualifies.

Review of 2025 Meeting Calendar

Jessica White, City Clerk, proposed a 2025 Meeting Calendar for City Council. Mrs. White confirmed this information is what the City of Tifton has done in the past.

Review and Discussion of HB581

Rob Wilmot, City Attorney, and Larry Lawrence, Interim City Manager, proposed and discussed HB581. The discussion consisted of Mr. Wilmot explaining what it meant to opt in HB581 and what is meant to opt out. Through the statewide referendum in November 2024, the voters elected to implement a statewide floating homestead exemption and local government can choose to opt in or out of the State's floating homestead exemption. Council briefly discussed the multiple layers of the bill and expressed interest in opting in.

Special Called Meeting

Approval of the Agenda – Council Member Reynolds made the first motion for approval of the agenda, motion seconded by Hall, and the agenda was unanimously approved.

Public Comments – Hayward Fowler – Mr. Fowler praised how the Police Department recently handled an incident. He also commented that the proposed trash pick-up changes will not benefit the poverty households and thought it would only increase their bill and they would not utilize the expanded service.

New Business**Resolution Approving the 2024 Tax Digest and Setting the Final Millage Rate**

Larry Lawrence, Interim City Manager, presented the 2024 tax digest, which totaled \$639,276,128.00, and recommended the Council accept the rollback and set the millage rate at 6.236. Due to the County-wide reassessments the City's property tax digest increased by roughly \$235 million for 2024 and the city proposed rolling back the millage rate from 9.272 to 6.236 to lessen the burden on the tax payers, while maintaining the necessary revenues for the city. Following review and a brief discussion, Council Member Reynolds made the first motion for approval of the resolution setting the millage rate at 6.236. The motion was seconded by Hall and unanimously approved.

Resolution Rescinding Resolutions 2024-53 and 2024-54 for Increases to Landfill Tipping Fees and Service Rates for Garbage Collection

Rob Wilmot, City Attorney, recommended rescinding the previously adopted resolutions due to the County not agreeing to increase the tipping fees at this time. He explained the Service Delivery Agreements with the County for the landfill and recommended calling an Service Delivery Meeting to discuss the tipping fees with the County, since this was a joint service. Following a brief discussion, Council Member Franks made the first motion for approval of the resolution, the motion was seconded by Reynolds, and unanimously approved.

City Manager Report

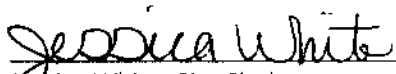
Larry Lawrence, Interim City Manager, presented an update which included the 2024 Audit Completion, which will be presented at the February 3rd, 2025 meeting. Mr. Lawrence reviewed the upcoming events planned for Downtown Tifton and the Tift Theatre. He also gave a brief update on the Fulwood Park Improvements. Lastly, Mr. Lawrence introduced the City's new Marketing Director, Caroline Abbott.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned.

Respectively Submitted,



Julie Smith Mayor



Jessica White, City Clerk