

**CITY OF TIFTON
COUNCIL WORKSHOP
MARCH 3, 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, Acting City Manager
Rob Wilmot, City Attorney
Jessica White, City Clerk

Members 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 Hall, and the agenda was unanimously approved.

Presentations

Jack Stone – Veterans Park Donation

Mr. Jack Stone presented a \$2,800 donation for maintenance of Veterans Park. He mentioned he raised funds over the years to support veterans and the park and decided to close the account and pass along the funds to the city to use for improvements and upkeep. Mayor Julie Smith accepted the donation on behalf of the city and thanked Mr. Stone for his generosity.

Proclamation Recognizing Child Abuse Prevention & Awareness Month.

Mayor Julie Smith presented a proclamation as a part of the national observance of Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Month. The Tift County Commission on Children and Youth accepted the proclamation and spoke about their upcoming pinwheel ceremony.

Public Comments

Jack Perry, 2216 Murray Avenue – Mr. Perry voiced concerns regarding the wildlife rescue located in his neighborhood, stating that he believes it is not appropriate for the area. He also expressed concerns about the presence of buzzards, attributing their activity to the nearby animal rehab.

Paul Von-Webb – 138 Campsite Road – Arabi, GA. – Mr. Von-Webb spoke in support of Steadfast Wildlife Rescue and mentioned a time when Jessica Piscotta rescued a deer from his property. Mr. Webb highlighted the positive the organization bring to the community and felt it should be viewed as a treasure and not a nuisance.

Michele Powers – 2205 Davis Ave – Ms. Powers expressed concerns regarding the proposed mosquito spraying, citing the potential dangers of the chemicals to beneficial insects and the community. She also suggested alternative uses for the allocated funding.

Melissa Hobbs Brown – 25 Lake Larry Drive – Ms. Hobbs spoke in support of Steadfast Wildlife Rescue and argued that the location wasn't violating zoning ordinances by boarding animals, because they rehab and release the animals.

Jessica Pisciotta – 2201 Hall Avenue – Ms. Pisciotta spoke on behalf of Steadfast Wildlife Rescue, providing a history of the organization and its work. She requested additional time beyond the initial 30-day period to relocate the rehabilitation facility, citing the need for funding and site preparation for the new location. Mayor Smith acknowledged the value of Ms. Pisciotta's rescue work but reiterated that the current location is not appropriate for the facility. Following her comments, the City Attorney advised Ms. Pisciotta to prepare a proposed relocation timeline and submit it to his office for the Council's consideration of a possible extension.

Alisha Story – 109 South Ashley Street – Valdosta, GA. – Ms. Story spoke in support of Steadfast Wildlife Rescue, highlighting the benefits of the triage room and suggesting community fundraising to expedite relocation.

Ouida Carns – 1408 Sutton Circle – spoke in support of Steadfast Wildlife Rescue and suggested a fundraiser be initiated to help expedite relocation.

Candice Jones – 102 Crissy Lane – Americus, GA, spoke in support of Jessica Pisciotta's dedicated work and the critical service she brings to animals vying for a second chance.

Sherry Gatewood – 2021 Oriole Way – Ms. Gatewood spoke in favor of the wildlife rescue. She mentioned she is a homeowner in the neighborhood and she has never smelled a bad odor or seen loose animals from the rescue.

Cliff Henderson – 2021 Murray Avenue – Mr. Henderson expressed zoning concerns and the risks the wildlife rehab facility poses to the neighborhood, mentioning his child had been attacked by Pisciotta's turkey. He noted that a recent news story showed numerous wildlife animals in her yard and felt the organization would only continue to expand its intake in the future and the problems will only continue if not addressed.

Eliz Palmer – 205 26th Street – Ms. Palmer voiced her support for Jessica Pisciotta, highlighting the level of care she provides to the rescued animals.

Old Business

Resolution Amending the FY2025 Budget for Mosquito Control

Mr. Jake Wells from Astro Exterminating presented information in regard to their proposal for spraying for mosquitos and the chemicals that will be used. The proposal included spraying the entire city once monthly at a rate of \$3,300/month. He reassured the council that the product being used is a safe application for controlling mosquitos and is a common treatment used in other communities. Councilman Hall questioned if the County sprayed for mosquitos and Mr. Lawrence confirmed that the County does spray.

New Business

Ryland Environmental – Proposed Contract Agreement

Mr. Aaron Sowa with Ryland Environmental presented a proposed contract amendment for extending its current garbage contract with the city for a five year period. The proposal presented included an annual rate increase based on inflation, a fuel surcharge based on diesel fuel prices, and increases as a result of increases in tipping fees. Council reviewed the proposal and Councilman Reynolds questioned if a flat rate without increases could be considered. Mr. John Nail w/ Ryland was not favorable of the request for a 5-year flat rate and commented that increases in the cost of services are expected.

Bid Recommendation for Downtown Historic Monument Sign Project (Bid No. 2025-01)

Larry Lawrence, Acting City Manager, presented that the bids received for the project and both bids exceeded the expected cost for the project. Staff recommended rejecting all bids and not proceeding with the project.

Bid Recommendation for 18th Street Ditch Improvements (Bid No. 2025-03)

Bids received for the project were presented as follows:

Southern Concrete	\$2,099,265.69
HTS Construction	\$2,158,008.60
Griffin Grading Concrete	\$2,354,879.79

Mr. Adam Cobb, Project Manager, recommended awarding the bid to the lowest bidder, Southern Concrete.

Discussion of Proposed FLOCK Safety System

Steve Hyman, Police Chief, requested the approval from City Council to acquire the FLOCK Raven and FLOCK Falcon systems to enhance the City of Tifton's response capabilities to gunshot incidents near key school areas. He mentioned the system will enhance safety, improve monitoring of potential threats, improve identification of suspect vehicles, reduce unnecessary responses to non-gunfire incidents, and increase security in residential zones and areas surrounding schools. He noted that 438 gunshot calls were received by 911 in 2024 and recommended implementing the system. The initial cost for the system totaled \$115,000 and Chief Hyman requested support for purchasing the system. Council reviewed the information presented and Councilman Hall noted that he has reviewed the system and visited neighboring communities to gain insight on how the system is working in their community.

Discussion of Proposed Amendments to Alcohol Catering Permits

Jessica White, City Clerk, asked for this discussion to be postponed.

Other Business

City Manager Report

Larry Lawrence, Acting City Manager, gave an update on the success of the Rhythm and Ribs Festival and thanked all those who had a part in making it a great event! He also gave an update on the street paving project and the timeline for the new stage at Fulwood Park.

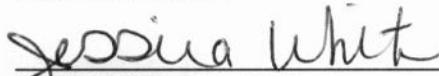
Mayor & Council Comments

Each of the Council Members praised the staff and organizers for hosting a terrific event, the annual Rhythm & Ribs Festival.

Mayor Julie Smith commented on Steadfast Wildlife Rescue and thanked Ms. Jessica Pisciotta for the work she is doing. She acknowledged that her efforts were admirable; however, she stated that the location of the rescue is a zoning issue that has to be addressed. Mayor Smith emphasized that the City of Tifton is willing to work with Ms. Pisciotta on a time extension for relocating.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Julie Smith", written over a horizontal line.

Julie Smith Mayor

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jessica White", written over a horizontal line.

Jessica White, City Clerk