**Council Minutes**

**Millen City Council**

**September 3, 2024**

**A regular meeting of the Millen City Council was held on September 3, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Present were Mayor King Rocker, Council Members Joel Carter Sr., Darrel Clifton, Ed Fuller and Robin Scott. Council Member Regina Coney was not present. Also present were City Attorney Hubert Reeves and City Manager Jeff Brantley.**

1. **Call to Order**

Mayor Rocker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. **Invocation**

City Attorney Hubert Reeves gave the invocation.

1. **Approve the amended Agenda adding item 5**

Council Member Clifton made a motion, seconded by Council Member Fuller to amend the agenda and add item 5 to the regular agenda. The motion carried by a vote of 5-0. Council Member Scott was not present for the vote.

1. **Consent Agenda**

**Approve Minutes from August 6, 2024 Regular Council Meeting**

Council Member Fuller made a motion, seconded by Council Member Clifton to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

1. **Adopt the MBE/WBE Outreach Plan for the 2024 CHIP Grant**

Council Member Clifton made a motion, seconded by Council Member Fuller to adopt the MBE/WBE Outreach Plan for the 2024 CHIP grant. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

1. **Review request from Delphine Swanson for Honorary Road (Intersection) Naming for Beulah Ramsey on Barney Avenue and Old Waynesboro Road**

After discussion Council tabled the request to designate Honorary Naming of the intersection at Barney Avenue and Old Waynesboro Road for Beulah Ramsey. According to the policy naming can only be for a road from beginning point to the ending point. A policy change would be needed for an intersection.

1. **MainStreet Millen Proposal**

MainStreet Millen Director asked Council to consider allowing MainStreet Millen to issue cups if Council ever allows special permit alcohol sales for special events. This could be a fundraiser for MainStreet Millen and could eliminate bottles from being used and broken on City Streets.

1. **Discuss City of Millen Property Tax Millage Rate and set Public Hearing Date(s)**

Council discussed the tax digest. The rollback rate would need to be 5.051 mills to avoid a tax increase. This would be a decrease from the current rate of 5.528 mills. Three public hearing will be held prior to voting on the tax millage rate at the October 1, 2024 regular council meeting, if Council goes above the 5.051 mills.

1. **Discuss water and sewer rate inflationary increases**

Council Member Clifton made a motion, seconded by Council Member Carter to raise the water and sewer rate by 3% for inside city residents and 5% for outside city residents effective with the next billing in October and include the same increase in October 2025 and October 2026. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

1. **Discuss closing the City RLF (Revolving Loan Fund) to receive points on next CDBG Grant**

Council Member Fuller made a motion, seconded by Council Member Clifton to send a letter to the Department of Community Services to close out the City’s Revolving Loan Fund that was created by the 2017 RDF Grant and remit the funds collected to the DCA, in exchange for 5 award points on the City’s 2025 or 2026 CDBG grant application. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

1. **City Manager Report**
2. **Financials**

City Manager Brantley reviewed the financials with the Mayor and Council. Net revenue was -90,013 for the month bringing the year-to-date Net Revenue at

-67,450. He informed that typical July, August and September were slow months for revenue and that in October the City would receive its Insurance Premium Tax for around $265,000. The City had 5 weekly and 3 bi-weekly payrolls during the month. This caused an increase in payroll above normal. Also, the City had several large natural gas repair expenditures during the month of over $25,000.

1. **2021 CDBG Closeout Update**

Council was informed the 2021 CDBG Closeout public hearing had been held. The total spent for the project was $915,490.31 of which the City paid $109,287.30 in matching funds. $194,546.99 in grant funds were de obligated for lack of housing projects in the target area.

Other grant updates: LMIG project was starting this week, paving Walnut, Chance and Burke Streets. RDF Grant Kirkland Building was having the electrical and HVAC installed. GEFA Grant Lead Service Line Inventory had been completed and submitted to the EPD. 1678 service lines were potholed. The next step is to notify the 592 lines that could potentially have lead fixtures. Of the $96,600 grant $11,900 was paid to 120 Water for compiling the data and submitting to the EPD with their software, $66,700 to Shockley Plumbing for the potholing ($40/service). $2275 will be paid to 120 Water for the mailing and tracking of the 592 suspect lines. The 2023 CDBG is in the process of bidding. The bids would be opened on September 18th.

1. **Community Research Grant Partnership with Georgia Southern**

Council was informed about a grant partnership with Georgia Southern University. The grant is a Partnership for Inclusive Innovation from Georgia Tech. The research is for using Artificial Intelligence to reduce pesticide use for cotton farmers around the City. GSU will receive $124,713 over a one year period to conduct research. The City will provide in kind aid for the project.

1. **Dog Pound updates**

The Humane Society of Savannah has received a two-year grant to help outlying animal control facilities like Millen. They are making improvements to the dog pound and setting up an adoption website to aid the City. They have adopted out 11 dogs up to the date of the meeting.

1. **Discuss Planning Retreat**

Council discussed having a planning retreat for 1-2 days early in 2025. City Manager Brantley stated Georgia Power puts on these type classes. Matt Forshee from Georgia Power is getting together a list of topics that may interest Council.

1. **Allgreen Service change in pickup method**

Council discussed the upcoming changes to the polycart pickup method by Allgreen Services. They are going to a sidearm truck beginning with the October 3rd pickup. Flyers with instructions will be going out to citizens in the October bill and its being posted on the City Facebook page.

1. **Mayor’s Report**

Mayor Rocker discussed the possibility of a new Railroad grant through the Thriving Community Program. We can look to extend the sidewalk project on Old Waynesboro Road or Playground equipment at the Community House.

1. **City Attorney Report**

City Attorney Reeves had nothing to report.

1. **Council Member Comments/Reports**

Council Member Clifton commented on the recent fire hydrant replacement on North Avenue. He stated the contractors installing the hydrant could have been more cautious with the flow of traffic and school buses. They were partially blocking the road with their parked vehicles and equipment. He also inquired about House Bill 581 that was going to be on the November general election ballot.

Council Member Carter inquired about the status of funding for playground equipment at the Community House. He was told grant funding was being sought through a T mobile grant and possibly Norfolk Southern.

1. **Executive Session**

Council Member Scott made a motion, seconded by Council Member Fuller at 7:13 p.m. to exit regular session to discuss tax matters. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Council Member Fuller made a motion at 7:53 p.m. seconded by Council Member Clifton to exit executive session and enter regular session. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Council Member Scott made a motion, seconded by Council Member Fuller to set the City’s property tax millage at 5.8 mills. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Public Hearings for the millage increase are scheduled for September 19th at 11:00 am; September 25th at 5:00 pm and October 1st at 6:00 pm.

1. **Adjournment**

There being no further business Mayor Rocker adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

**Approved by Mayor and Council: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Mayor’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Attest by City Manager: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**