**MEMBERS PRESNET**

Mayor, Scott Harpold

Mayor Pro-Tem and Council Woman Mary Clark Council Member Jeff Spratlin Council Member, Henrietta Williams Council Member, Leah Carey Council Member, Betty Jo Maxwell Attorney Douglas Kidd

**MEDIA PRESENT** Mark Berryman, 105.3 Radio station Rose Scoggins, Elberton Star

**STAFF PRESENT:** Acting City Clerk, Savannah Ivester

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm. A prayer was said by Council Woman Mary Clark. The Pledge of Allegiance was said after our prayer.

**REZONING REQUEST – MARK CAREY:**

Mark Carey brought forth to the Council a proposal of wanting to rezone his Property that is currently zoned as Agricultural zoned to R-3 Residential. Mr. Carey stated that those who opposed chicken houses in Bowman should ask council members to approve his rezone request or he would de-annex the property and build chicken houses if he did not get approval to build 40 apartments on the property. He also said the request was supposed to have been placed on the October, November and December 2023 agendas but had not been. He stated his issue was not as much rezoning as whether or not a permit inspector can pull a permit after it had already been issued by the council. Mr. Carey asked numerous times what a permit inspector is.

Attorney Douglas Kidd told Mr. Carey that once approved by council, a permit can only be receded through legal means after due-process. Mr. Carey stated that he had sent the documents an hour after the request was made. Mr. Harpold said he had never received a plat showing buildings, streets or infrastructure. Mr. Carey restated that all of the requested documents, including a site plan, had been sent to the city attorney, and Mr. Kidd again stated all documents he had received had been sent to the mayor. Mr. Kidd suggested the matter be tabled until next month to be sure all necessary documents had been submitted and council approved the table.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA (O.C.G.A 50-14-1(e)(1)**

Mayor Scott Harpold asked for a motion to approve the Agenda. Council Woman Mary Clark made the motion. Councilman Jeff Spratlin seconded. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES (O.C.G.A 50-14-1(e)(2)**

Mayor Scott Harplold asked for a motion to accept the Minutes from December 18th, 2023 council meeting. Council Woman Henrietta Williams asked to make a correction on the Beer and wine sales motion. She asked to change a sentence that stated “Council Member seconded the motion” be corrected to “Council Woman Mary Clark seconded the motion”. Mayor Harpold asked for a motion to approve the minutes with the change that needed to be corrected. Council Woman Henrietta Williams made the motion. Mary Clark seconded this. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM CALLED MEETING JANURARY 11TH, 2924:**

Mayor Scott Harpold asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the called meeting on January 11th for the changing of the policy on the Beer and wine sales ordinance. Council Woman Henrietta Williams made a motion. Councilman Jeff Spratlin seconded.

**APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 27TH 2023:**

Mayor Scott Harpold asked for a motion to accept the minutes from November 27th executive session. Council Woman Henrietta Williams made the motion. Council Woman Mary Clark seconded. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 22ND 2023:**

Mayor Scott Harpold asked for a motion to accept the minutes from December 22nd executive session. Council Woman Henrietta Williams made the motion. No other Council persons seconded the motion. Council Woman Mary Clark stated she did not feel comfortable voting on something that cannot be discussed. Mayor Harpold then stated this will be tabled to talk about in executive session.

**JEFF SPRATLIN, NEW COUNCIL MEMBER:**

Councilman Jeff Spratlin was welcomed in as our new Council Member. As well as Council Woman Henrietta Williams was sworn back in for another term serving on Council.

**CITY CLERK POSITION:**

Mayor Scott Harpold appointed Brooke Sabatini to be the new City Clerk with the pay of $19.50 an hour.

Council Woman Betty Jo Maxwell made a statement saying she thought at least one Council Member had to sit in on all interviews. Mayor Harpold explained that the City Clerk is appointed by the Mayor. He also stated that he created an “Ad-Hoc” personnel committee to assist with the hiring process. Those who helped on this committee was himself, his wife Angie Harpold, Tammy Dalton, and Sharon Carey.

After some confusing statements about who appoints the City Clerk, Attorney Kidd stated that the procedure is that the Mayor selects who he wants to hire, and the Council either says yes or no and if Council says no, it goes back to the Mayor to select someone else. Mayor Harpold asked for a motion to accept Brooke Sabatini as the new City Clerk. No Council member made motion. Council Woman Mary Clark stated they felt they all were not informed on when interviews were going to take place and who was on the personnel committee, as well as look at all applications from applicants; therefore they feel they cannot make an informed decision.

Mayor Harpold stated this will be tabled for a revote during called meeting.

**MAYORS REPORT:**

Mayor Scott Harpold reported that he is working on getting education for staff. The Water Department currently does not have any classifications for their education; having this could save the city over $500.00 a month due to having to pay another company to do our water and sewer testing since we don’t have a class-free designation. He is looking to get two employees trained on water and two on sewer. The training class for this is $500.00 a person and is one week long. He also is looking into the possibility of having someone in the Gas Department trained on how to weld. This will be useful in welding gas lines.

He also stated that he has spoken with Elbert County and a few other sources on getting a price to help clear land for the road to the City Park.

Mr. Harpold said that we may have one applicant for the Beer and Wine sales and that we will work with attorney Kidd to make sure everything is done correctly.

As well as explained that the LMIG Grant is something that the City gets in order to help with road improvements and repairs. In 2020 we received an $18,000.00 grant. He spoke with the head of the DOT; if we fill out the application for the grant, they will see when the draft is done and it may be a possibility we could still get the grant.

Mr. Harpold stated that he received a bill from 2022 that was sent from GMA for $52,000.00. He said we will have to set up a payment plan with GMA in order to pay for this since the City does not have that kind of money.

Mr. Harpold also brought up that the Council and other committees need to come up with ways on how to save money as well as bring in money for the City. Council Woman Leah Carey then asked Mr. Harpold why he could spend $600.00 on new keys for City Hall when they had just previously been changed and wanted to know how he justifies that money being spent. Harpold explained that when any new Council or Mayor comes in, there needs to be protection due to security issues as well as the finances and possibly things being stolen. He also stated that the keys he had made were security keys that cannot be copied.

**ATTORNEYS REPORT: Attorney Douglas Kidd**

Attorney Kidd stated that “Carey’s” Gas Station, now called “One Stop Shop”, had long been thought to be in the unincorporated part of the County and not in the City limits of Bowman; has now came across a survey and looks that it may be in the City limits after all. Mr. Kidd said he will get with the County attorney to try to figure out any implementations as far as sales tax goes. He stated that he will have more information on this at the next Council Meeting.

Mr. Kidd also wanted to let the Council and public know that in the Aubrey Lunsford’s chicken house matter, Mr. Lunsford, through his attorney, has filed a motion to set aside the judgement in that case and is reviewing the petition, once filed with the court he will share it with the Council and the Public.

**HOSPITAL AUTHORITY REPORT:**

For the month of December 2023, the hospital had an average daily census of 16.7 patients versus 14.6 in December 2022. November 2023 had an average daily census of 11.4. Gross patient revenue was $3,404,780.00 in December 2023 versus $2,981,000.00 in December 2022. This is an increase of 4.2%. The income for December 2023 was $440,422.00 favorable to the budget.

**DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY REPORT: Betty Jo Maxwell**

Council Woman Betty Jo gave her report that the developmental authority will probably have a meeting the first of February. Maxwell also stated that Mayor Scott Harpold was going to assign someone else to this committee but that she has 2 more year’s term on the committee

**COUNCIL MEMBERS REPORT:**

Betty Jo Maxwell – Cemetery Report: Council Woman Betty Jo Maxwell reported that when she used to be Clerk, someone had donated money to the City’s Cemetery fund. She has since found out who this person was and wants to use this money to clean up the Cemetery.

Henrietta Williams – Special Events Report: Council Woman Henrietta Williams said that our Spring Festival will be held on April 19th and 20th. She also stated that our Big Iron Crank-up and spring festival is usually the same time, but has not heard for sure. She will have more information on the Big Iron Crank-up later on. Williams also stated that anyone who wants to join the special events committee is welcome to; she has a sign-up sheet that can be filled out with her.

Mary Clark – Bowman Elementary building: Council Woman Mary Clark reported on behalf of the Bowman Elementary Building that is now called the Bowman Resource Center. She stated that the Bowman Elementary Governing Board held their very first meeting electing officers by acclamation on November 2nd, 2024. During this time, officers were elected; the president is David Harper, vice president is Tammy Dalton, Herself is secretary and the treasurer is Pat Elrod. They discussed short and long range plans like community clean up days.

David Harper spoke regarding the Bowman Resource Center and damages that need repairing. (Most of audio is inaudible due to having to listen on radio station page)

Leah Carey- Library: Council Woman Leah Carey stated that she has spoken with Jan Burroughs from Elbert County about a meeting in February that she will attend once she knows the date and time. Bowman’s Library reported consisted of 85 books checked out, 6 DVD’S, 0 park passes, in-house attendance of 154, 112 computer users, 85 Wi-Fi users, $47 in local prints, 2 programs, $15.20 in pines. With a total of $62.20 for the month of December 2023.

Jeff Spratlin- Bowman Park: Councilman Jeff Spratlin stated that he had spent some time at the park and noticed a lot of things that need to be repaired. Another thing he mentioned would be to cut off power to anything down there we aren’t using besides the Wells in order to save a few dollars on the power bill each month. (Most of audio is inaudible due to having to listen on radio station page.)

**MARY CLARK – MLK PARADE:**

Council Woman Mary Clark spoke on behalf of the Martin Luther King Parade; she stated that it was canceled initially but Clark spoke with Rev. Hughes who’s a part of this committee, and said they called a meeting to go ahead and plan the Parade thanks to all of the support from the community. Clark and her husband were also asked to be the Grand Marshalls; she thanked the city, Mr. Harpold and his family, and all of council for their support.

**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT REPORT:**

Gas superintendent, Lloyd Ivester stated that the Gas Department had three leak calls in the month of January.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

Mayor Scott Harpold asked for a motion to go into executive session. Council Woman Mary Clark made the motion. Councilman Jeff Spratlin seconded. Motion carried.

**ADJOURNMENT.**