



The Work Session of the Mayor and Council was held in the Council room of West Point City Hall November 28, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. with Mayor Pro-Tem Steve Tramell opening the session.

Members Present:

Councilmember Joseph R. Downs III
Councilmember Gerald W. Ledbetter
Councilmember Sandra Thornton
Councilmember Gloria R. Marshall
Councilmember Benjamin F. Wilcox

Members Absent:

Public Hearing 2018 Proposed Budget

Public Hearing to receive comments concerning the proposed 2018 City of West Point Budget. Key elements of the 2018 Proposed Budget will include 2% COLA. There will be no Water, Sewer, Electric, or Gas rate increases. Total operating budget will be \$19.4 million dollars. Total Budget \$20.5 million dollars.

There were no comments and the public hearing was closed.

Agenda Reviewed

Mayor Pro-Tem Steve Tramell reviewed the agenda and asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Councilmember Gerald W. Ledbetter made said motion; seconded by Councilmember Gloria R. Marshall; **passed unanimously**

Public Comments on any Item

Deedee Williams stated she have two comments and requested her comments be made part of the minutes as well as the media coverage.

1) Unexpired Term of Office-Mayor of West Point, GA

“The recent election for Mayor of West Point which was held on November 7th was a Special Election, the purpose of which, was to elect a Mayor for the remaining unexpired term which began when Drew Ferguson announced his candidacy for Georgia’s 3rd District, US Congress. That announcement was made

on January 25, 2016. Since that time, and particularly during the recent month, we have been reminded numerous times that this unexpired term is a 2-year term. In the November 8th issue of the VT-N is under new ownership, or has a new editor (as of yesterday). However, this article was written by News Editor, Wayne Clark who has extensive tenure with the paper. So ...in the interest of Concerned Citizens, please set the record straight. Is the term for Mayor beginning January 1, 2017 a two-year term or a four-year term?"

2) Inconsistently applied policies/Out of date policies.

“Throughout the recent campaign period, there were instances when city employees were engaged in campaign activities outside of their scheduled work time. In one scenario, an employee was counseled and provided a copy of the City of West Point Personnel Policies, Section 7: Conduct, 7.0 Prohibited Activities, which states in part, Employees may express their political opinions privately. Further political activity should be avoided. These statements were excerpted from the policy without regard to the complete statement of policy and was interpreted in a manner which prohibited non-city employees from expressing their political preferences and views. It is my opinion that this policy, and particularly the interpretation used in this case, is not legally defensible, and even worse, it is not applied consistently to all city employees. So, in the interest of concerned Citizens, please set the record straight. “What is the date of the last Personnel Policies Manual review?” Does Section 7,7.0 reflect the spirit of the Hatch Act”

Mayor Pro-Tem Steve Tramell stated the mayoral term is for two years, beginning January 2018.

City Manager Ed Moon stated he did not have the Personnel Policies Manual present and he provide her with answers to her questions.

Earnest Ward, President of the Troup County NAACP, addressed the Council concerning at large voting. He stated voting at large instead of in Districts do not give citizens representation from people who lives in their communities. He asked the Council to consider changing voting at large to voting in districts.

Pat Darden, representing the Troup County Democratic Party, stated she wanted to echo the remarks and concerns made by Earnest Ward and asked the Council to consider voting in districts.

New Business

- **2018 Budget Proposed Budget**

City Manager Ed Moon stated there were no changes from the previous work session. He reviewed elements of the 2018 Budget which include 2% COLA. Total operating budget will be \$20,367,802. Copies of the proposed budget are available at City Hall and the budget is posted on the City's web-site.

- **10th Street Property Exchange**

City Manager Ed Moon stated the City of West Point has worked out an agreement for property exchange with Bethlehem Baptist Church. Bethlehem own 0.36 acre, more or less east of part of tract 44 with a building. The City owns 0.607 acre, more or less of the west part of tract 44. Subject to the City's completion of the conditions set forth in O.C.G.A. 36-37-6, which if satisfied, will result in an affirmative vote of the Mayor and Council to conclude the transaction, Bethlehem agrees to exchange, swap and convey the Bethlehem Parcel for the City Parcel. The item will be on the next work session for further consideration.

- **West Point Development Authority Funding Agreement**

City Manager Ed Moon stated the City of West Point and the West Point Development Authority have a joint interest in the economic development of the City. The City agrees to the extent necessary to dedicate funds from its ad valorem tax receipts to support the payments authority. The City and the Authority have determined that such payments will achieve valid public purposes and will promote and expand trade, commerce and public good and welfare of the City of West Point and its citizens. The City shall pay to the Authority \$120,000.00 per year for ten (10) years. The Authority shall use such funds to further its powers and duties as authorized under the constitutional amendment creating the West Point Development Authority, as may be amended from time to time, and pursuant to Georgia law. Each party will have 21 days to review. The city will run advertisement in the newspaper four times prior to the exchange. The item will be on the next work session agenda for further consideration.

- **Downtown West Point Development Authority Forward Fund Application**

City Manager Ed Moon stated the City has received a Forward Fund Application from the Downtown West Point Development Authority (DWPDA). The application is complete and is being presented to the City Council. Key elements of the application are

- Purchase 12.3 acres of land known as the 2nd Avenue Woodyard
- Total Project Cost \$600,000
- Request Forward Fund amount \$350,000
- DWPDA has received a commitment of \$200,000 from WPDA
- Property to be developed for residential, retail or commercial
- Property is within the 10th Street Area Redevelopment Plan

The city has funds available for this project. The application will be on the next work session for further consideration.

- **Georgia Firefighter's Cancer Benefit Program**

City Manager Ed Moon stated in 2017, Representative Micah Gravley and Senator John Albers efforts help HB 146 passed out of the General Assembly Firefighters' Cancer Insurance Benefits. The HB 146 Act provides firefighters, including volunteers, with monetary assistance in the event they are diagnosed with cancer. All entities that have firefighters certified in the State of Georgia, whether public or private have to provide the coverage. Georgia Municipal Association provide the coverage through the Hartford Life and Accident Insurance Company. There are two parts of the Act relating to a diagnosis of cancer for eligible firefighters. One is a critical illness requirement and the other is an income replacement requirement. Depending on the severity of the diagnosis, the critical illness requirement is either \$25,000 or \$6,250. The income replacement requirement is 60% of the firefighter's total salary as a paid firefighter, or \$5,000 per month, whichever is less for a period of 36 months. The Act become effective 01/01/2018. The cost will be \$3,136.00 annually. The item will be on the next work session for further consideration.

- **Board & Committee Appointments**

City Manager Ed Moon gave a review of the 2017 City Boards, Authorities and Commissions. He stated the December agenda will consist of the West Point Development Authority, incumbent Lionel Johnson term will expire 12/31/2017. Mr. Johnson has indicated he will not seek to serve another term.

OTHER BUSINESS

Councilmember Sandra Thornton stated the Salvation Army Red Kettle Ringing of the Bell will take place in West Point. Captain Robert Fawley will take the lead on this event. The bagging of the Toys for Tots will be on December 9th. The toys will be picked up on December 11th. She encouraged all members to participate in this event. Mayor Pro-Tem stated the Christmas parade will be on December 7th.

ADJOURN

Councilmember Joseph R. Downs III made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Benjamin F. Wilcox; **passed unanimously**. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned