



## City of West Point

Council Work Session Minutes

Thursday, Nov. 24, 2020 @ 5:30 p.m.

Via teleconference

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The Work Session of the Mayor and Council was held by Teleconference November 24, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. with Mayor Steve Trammell presiding.

Members Participated:

Mayor Pro-Tem Alanteo “Henry” Hutchinson  
Councilmember Joseph R. Downs III  
Councilmember Gerald W. Ledbetter  
Councilmember Gloria R. Marshall  
Councilmember Sandra Thornton  
Councilmember Deedee Williams

Members Non-Participate:

### **Public Hearing for the 2021 Proposed City of West Point Budget**

Prior to the Work Session Mayor Trammell open a public hearing to hear input concerning the proposed 2021 City of West Point Budget. There were no public comments. Mayor Trammell closed the public hearing.

### **Agenda Reviewed**

Mayor Steve Trammell called the meeting to order. He reviewed the agenda and asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Councilmember Sandra Thornton made said motion; seconded by Councilmember Gerald W. Ledbetter; **passed unanimously**

### **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

### **New Business**

- **Motorized Carts**

Mayor Trammell stated in October work session the Council discussed a measure that would allow the use of motorized carts on certain city streets. Motorized cart is every motor vehicle having not less than (4) wheels and an unladen weight of one thousand three hundred (1,300) pounds or less and which cannot operate at more than twenty (20) miles per hour. He reviewed the proposed ordinance which included decals issued by the City and cannot be transferred to other carts, all occupants must wear seatbelts at all times, the carts shall not be operated on the sidewalks, restrictions placed upon licensed motorists shall apply in the same manner as if they were operating a motor vehicle, and motorized carts cannot be operated on any street with a posted speed limit above (30) thirty miles per hour or on State Routes but motorized carts may cross State Routes on

city streets. Mayor Tramell asked for any additional general comments. There were some discussions on the speed limit, registration fees, decals, driver's registration, time of operations, and age of person applying for registration, age of persons operating the cart, liability insurance and the streets designated for cart use. Councilmember Gerald W. Ledbetter suggested where there are streets with wide lanes, maybe creating lanes for carts. The discussion came up about disparity of areas where streets are narrow and may limit the use of carts. City Staff will draft an ordinance for council approval.

- **Decriminalization of Marijuana**

Mayor Steve Tramell stated in October the council discussed information on decriminalizing marijuana. He stated the current City of West Point ordinance Sec. 12-29 Possession of less than one ounce or less of marijuana, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and punished by imprisonment for a period not to exceed twelve (12) months or a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) or both, or public works not to exceed twelve (12) months. Cities such as Clarkston GA ordinance state It shall be unlawful for any person to possess one (1) ounce or less of marijuana within the corporate limits of the city. Conviction for violation of this section shall be punished by a fine of seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) and no person convicted of violating this section shall be punished by confinement for any period. The City of LaGrange ordinance in part states, it shall be unlawful for any person to possess one (1) ounce or less of marijuana within the corporate limits of the city. A civil fine, not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100.00) shall be assessed against any person found to be in violation of this code section. The finding of a violation under this section shall be a civil infraction and shall not constitute a criminal infraction or criminal offense for any purpose. The changes will allow the City's ordinance to resemble or mirror one of the Cities that have reduced possession of one ounce or less of marijuana to fines and no confinement. Councilmember Deedee Williams stated she needed clarity of misdemeanors and civil offences. City Attorney Alex Dixon stated civil offences involve fines and no arrest or confinement. He also stated some of the fines that other city's have imposed are lower than other offenses such as open container laws. Councilmember Henry Hutchinson stated the decriminalizing of less than an ounce of marijuana was personal to him. He shared an incident that happen to him when he was 17 years old and a passenger in a vehicle in which marijuana was found and the hardship it put on his family. The item will be on the next agenda for further discussion.

- **Board & Committee Appointment**

Mayor Steve Tramell stated Kevin Patrick has applied to be considered to serve another 5-year term on the West Point Development Board. Kevin currently serves as the Chairman of the Board. He asked if there were any discussion concerning his re-appointment.

- **Resolution for Franchise Fees**

Mayor Steve Tramell stated the City currently collects franchise fees from cable and video providers. Included in the Council packet is a proposed resolution that will be filed with the Secretary of State office to assure the City will receive a franchise fee of 5% from any cable or video provider that holds a franchise issued by the state. There was some discussion of the difference between Franchise fees and Pole attachment fees. The item will be on the next agenda for further consideration.

- **Water Sewer Refinance Update**

Andrew Tritt Representative of Stifel stated earlier this year he addressed the Mayor and Council about refinancing the the City of West Point debt obligations related to water and sewerage system. The City has \$19,369,688 of principal outstanding. These debt obligations interest rates range between 2.50% and 4.50% the climate for refinancing debt is very good. The City of West Point Water and Sewer debt could be refinanced with rates between 2.25 and 3.99 that would save the City approximately 1.3 million dollars over thirty years. He stated lenders are reluctant to re-financing debt with fixed rates for over 15 years.

- **Municipal Court Judge Update**

Mayor Steve Tramell stated the West Point Municipal Court Judge Wesley Leonard won a runoff election in August to become the Troup County State Court Judge beginning in January 2021. The Council will have to appoint a new Municipal Court Judge. City Manager Ed Moon has advertised the opening with the Troup County Bar Association and has received 4 letters of interest and resumes. The Jude is appointed in the first meeting January of each year. If necessary, the Assistant Judge can preside until a Judge is appointed. City Manager Ed Moon stated he would send recommendation to the council for application deadline dates or for a special called meeting on December 14 if necessary.

- **Resolution for Judge Leonard at Council Meeting**

Mayor Tramell stated a resolution for Judge Wesley Leonard will be presented at the December 14 business meeting.

- **City Auditor Update**

The City has been notified by Robin Underwood that her firm will no longer conduct the annual City Audit. Robin served the city for over two decades. A new firm will need to be in place in early 2021 to complete the 2020 audit in a timely manner. City staff has prepared a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a new city audit firm. A timeline has been established in the RFP to complete the process of engaging a new firm. Once the RFP process is completed City Staff will review and present a recommendation to the Mayor and City Council for approval.

## **Other**

Mayor Tramell stated the Thanksgiving Day Dinner for needed residents will take place again this year beginning at 11:00 AM on the vacant lot MLK and 10<sup>th</sup> Street and he also stated donations were welcome.

Councilmember Deedee Williams stated Trust Building is in the process of hiring a new Executive Director and applications are being accepted through November 30<sup>th</sup>.

Councilmember Sandra Thornton thanked Hyundai Transys Georgia for sponsoring children through the Salvation Army Adopt a Child for Christmas gifts.

## **Items on the agenda for the Work Session Thursday December 10 @ 5:30pm via teleconference**

Mayor Tramell asked for a motion to adopt four items for the next work session agenda. The Decriminalization of marijuana, Development Authority Board Appointment, Resolution for Franchise Fee and the Judge Appointment. Councilmember Gerald W. Ledbetter made said motion and seconded by Councilmember Joseph R. Downs III; **passed unanimously**.

## **Adjourn**

Councilmember Joseph R. Downs III made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Sandra Thornton; **passed unanimously**.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned