



City of West Point

Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, December 14, 2020 @ 5:30 PM

Via teleconference

The regular meeting of the Mayor and Council was held by Teleconference December 14, 2020 at 5:30 P.M. with Mayor Steven M. Tramell presiding.

Members Participated:

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

Members Non-Participate:

Councilmember Gerald W. Ledbetter gave the opening prayer.

Mayor Tramell called the meeting of the Council to order and welcomed everyone.

MINUTES

Mayor Tramell asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 14, 2020 Regular Business Meeting. Councilmember Gerald W. Ledbetter made said motion; seconded by Councilmember Sandra Thornton; **passed unanimously**.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mayor Tramell stated the financial report for approval is in the Council packet. Mayor Tramell asked for a motion to approve the November Financial report. Councilmember Sandra Thornton made said motion; seconded by Councilmember Gloria R. Marshall; **passed unanimously**.

AGENDA

Mayor Tramell asked for a motion to approve the agenda

- Amendment to the City Ordinance to City Ordinance to Decriminalize Marijuana
- Appointment of Kevin Patrick to the West Point Development Authority Board
- Franchise Fee Resolution
- Water and Sewer 2021 Bond Resolution
- Hyundai Transys Georgia MOU
- Approval of the 2021 Budget

Councilmember Gloria R. Marshall made said motion; seconded by Councilmember Deedee Williams; **passed unanimously**.

NEW BUSINESS

• **DECRIMINALIZATION OF MARIJUANA**

Mayor Tramell asked for a motion to amend the City Code of Ordinance to decriminalize one ounce or less marijuana. It will delete Section 12-29 in its entirety and insert a new Section 12-29 to be entitled "Possession of Marijuana". (a) It shall be unlawful for any person to possess one ounce or less of marijuana within the limits of the city. (b) The Municipal Court is granted jurisdiction to try and dispose of cases where a person is charged with the possession of one (1) ounce or less of marijuana if the offense occurred within the corporate limits of the city. The jurisdiction of the municipal court shall be concurrent with the jurisdiction of any other courts within the county having jurisdiction to try and dispose of such cases. (c) For an offense in violation of this Code Section, a civil fine shall be assessed according to the following schedule: a civil fine not to exceed one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for the first offense; a civil fine not to exceed \$200.00 for the second offense; and a civil fine not to exceed \$350.00 for any third or subsequent offense of this Code Section. The finding of a violation under this Code Section shall be a civil infraction and shall not constitute a criminal offense for any purpose. (d) Any person charged with possession of one ounce or less of marijuana under this section shall be entitled, upon request, to have their case transferred to the court within the county having general misdemeanor jurisdiction over the alleged offense. (e) Each violation of this Code Section shall be considered a separate and distinct offense, punishable as a civil offense with penalties as set forth under this Code Section. Councilmember Henry Hutchinson made said motion; seconded by Councilmember Gloria R. Marshall; The motion **passed unanimously**.

• **WEST POINT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD APPOINTMENT**

Mayor Tramell asked for a motion to appoint Kevin Patrick to serve another 5-year term on the West Point Development Authority Board. Kevin Patrick currently serves as the Chairman of the Board. Councilmember Deedee Williams made said motion; seconded by Councilmember Gloria R. Marshall; **passed unanimously**.

• **RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH FRANCHISE FEES**

Mayor Tramell asked for a motion to approve a resolution to establish a franchise fee applicable to the holders of cable and video franchises issued by the state of Georgia. Councilmember Gerald W. Ledbetter made said motion; seconded by Councilmember Henry Hutchinson; **passed unanimously**.

• **WATER AND SEWER REFINANCE**

Mayor Tramell asked for a motion to approve a 2021 bond resolution and all associated documents, refunding revenue bonds in the aggregate principal amount of \$17,903,000.

Councilmember Gerald W. Ledbetter made said motion; seconded by Councilmember Sandra Thornton; **passed unanimously.**

- **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CITY OF WEST POINT AND HYUNDAI TRANSYS PROWERTRAIN INC**

Mayor Tramell asked for a motion to approve a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of West Point and Hyundai Transys Powertrain Inc. Hyundai Transys Powertrain will construct a new \$240 million dollar manufacturing facility and create approximately 700 new jobs in the City of West Point. Councilmember Gloria R. Marshall made said motion; seconded by Councilmember Sandra Thornton. **The motion passed on a 5-0 vote. Councilmember Deedee Williams abstained citing conflict of interest. Councilmember Williams is employed by the company.**

- **2021 PROPOSED BUDGET**

Mayor Tramell asked for a motion to approve the proposed 2021 Budget. The total is \$18,131,374 which includes General Fund \$5,942,550, Electric \$6,324,000, Water & Sewer \$3,634,224, Gas \$1,369,200, E-911 \$335,150, and \$526,250 Sanitation. The budget includes a 2% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and a 2% increase in Water, Sewer and a small increase in Garbage and Trash. The budget also included creating and funding for two new positions one in Finance and one in Human Resource and funding for the Assistant City Clerk position. Councilmember Sandra Thornton made said motion; seconded by Councilmember Gloria R. Marshall; **passed unanimously.**

- **APPOINTMENT OF MUNICIPAL JUDGE**

Councilmember Gerald W. Ledbetter made a motion to add a discussion about the process of interviewing three candidates for Municipal Judge to the agenda. The candidates are Benjamin Wilcox, Luther Jones, and James G. Baker. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Joseph R. Downs III. During the discussion Councilmember Deedee Williams stated she thought other candidates should have been included in the interviews. She questioned the process and how the other members arrived at the final three that are included in the motion. The motion passed on a 5-1 vote. Councilmember Deedee Williams voted No.

Councilmembers discussed the number of questions to pose to candidates, who would prepare the questions, and how long the interviews would last. The council concluded Councilmembers may come up with their own questions or used questions prepared by City Staff. They did not limit the length of the interviews.

- **OTHER**

Councilmember Sandra Thornton thanked all the volunteers and companies who donated their time and money to purchase and prepare Christmas gifts for local children. The toys were donated and distributed through the Salvation Army.

ADJOURN

Mayor Tramell asked for a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Gloria R. Marshall made said motion and seconded by Councilmember Joseph R. Downs III; **passed unanimously.**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Richard McCoy
City Clerk

Steven M. Tramell
Mayor