



City of West Point
Council Work Session Minutes
Tuesday, November 26, 2024 @ 5:30 p.m.
West Point Council Chambers

The Work Session of the Mayor and Council was held in the Council room of West Point City Hall November 26, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. with Mayor Steve Tramell opening the session.

Members Present:

Mayor Pro-Tempore Joseph R. Downs III
Councilmember Gloria R. Marshall
Councilmember Gerald E. Ledbetter
Councilmember Joel B. Finlay
Councilmember Kevin M. Patrick
Councilmember Sandra Thornton

Members Absent:

Public Hearing

Mayor Tramell opened a public hearing for input from the public on the 2025 Proposed City Budget. There were no comments. The mayor closed the public hearing.

Mayor Tramell opened a public hearing for input from the public on the Rezoning & Annexation at 523 Warner Road. There were no comments. The mayor closed the public hearing.

Mayor Tramell called the November 26, 2024, Mayor and Council meeting to order.

Review Agenda

Mayor Steve Tramell called the meeting to order. He reviewed the agenda and asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Councilmember Joseph R. Downs III made said motion. Councilmember Gerald E. Ledbetter seconded the motion; **passed unanimously.**

Public Comment on Any Items

There were no public comments.

Monthly Reports

Police Chief Kevin Carter, Utilities Director Sammy Inman, Public Works Director Roderick Palmer, Community Development Director Dennis Dutton, and Recreation Director Michael Wayne Pitts gave the Mayor and Council a summary on their October monthly reports. Copies of the reports are included in the Mayor and Council monthly packet.

New Business

- **Retirement Proclamation presented to Richard McCoy**

Mayor Steve Tramell presented City Clerk Richard McCoy with a Proclamation honoring his 34 years of dedicated, professional and meritorious service to the City of West Point. Mr. McCoy had a measurable impact during his employment with the city and will continue to have an impact on the city for years to come. The Mayor and Council congratulate him on his well-earned retirement, and best wishes to him and his family.

The Mayor of the City of Brunswick Cosby H. Johnson and City Clerk Naomi Atkinson provided a proclamation for Mayor Steve Tramell to present to City Clerk Richard McCoy for his commitment to the City of West Point. Recognizing his numerous accomplishments and for receiving 2022 Georgia Municipal Clerk of the Year.

Deborah Walker-Reed, President of the Georgia Municipal Clerks Association, presented a proclamation to honor Richard for his thirty-four years of service and to thank him for his involvement as a Georgia Municipal Clerks Association District 4 Director, chairperson of various boards, and for shaping GMCA policies and guidelines. The Mayor of the City of St Mary's John F. Morrissey delegated City Clerk Deborah Walker-Reed to present Richard McCoy with a City Challenge Coin for Richard McCoy's outstanding service to the City of West Point. A challenge coin is a tradition going back to ancient times. It is a symbol of honor and respect. They are highly valued, rarely given and hold deep symbolic significance.

- **Amendment to EZ Blockchain Agreement**

City Attorney Alex Dixon discussed the proposed renewal to the EZ Blockchain Agreement. The renewal will be for another three-year agreement. There are two service stations with a total service of 24 megawatts, contracted at 5% margin. The renewal agreement will be on the meeting agenda for council consideration.

- **Rezoning & Annexation at 523 Warner Road**

City Community Development Director Dennis Dutton stated Mr. Chris Welton of Safe Truck Parking Solutions, LLC is requesting to annex and rezone the property located at 523 Warner Road, in the unincorporated Troup County. The parcels consist of approximately 25.59 acres. To annex and rezone the property from general commercial to Mixed Use District. The Municipal Planning Board will meet on December 2 to make recommendations for the request to annex and rezone. Mr. Welton's plan is to annex into the City of West Point for the water, sewer, electricity, public safety, etc. to develop a truck parking service as well as buildings for commercial and industrial uses. An ordinance for rezoning and annexation will be on the meeting agenda for council consideration.

- **2025 Proposed City Budget**

City Manager Ed Moon stated there have been no changes to the budget. The total proposed budget including all funds is \$29,810,014.06. Operation Budgets Electric \$11.5 million, General Government \$9 million, Water/Sewer \$4 million, Gas \$1 million, Sanitation \$.5 million, and SPLOST \$2.9 million. There is a 4% cost of living adjustment (COLA) also included. The electric includes Meter Replacement and Remote Reading Technology, Increased contractor cost for maintenance, purchase vacuum trailer. Water & Sewer includes Meter Replacement and Remote Reding Technology, Increased material cost. Gas includes Meter Replacement and Remote Reading Technology, and increased material cost. General Fund/SPLOST VI General Government Hire part time or contract maintenance, Fill Youth Services Director Position, Purchase Admin Fleet vehicle. Police Building Improvements, Speed Detection Trailer. Fire/EMS Purchase Ambulance (SPLOST VI) Public Works Increase paving & equipment (SPLOST VI) also included in the budget is a Proposed Rate Adjustment dues to increases in cost across all goods and services Water and Sewer Rate Increase 6% Garbage Rate increase 2.9% Curbside Trash Collection \$1.00 per month increase. Residential Water Bill $\$10.45 \times 6\% = \$.63$

increase per CCF $\$3.43 \times 6\% = \$.20$ increase 2024 5 CCF = $\$27.60$ 2025 %CCF = $\$29.15$ (12.55) AMWASTE $\$12.12 \times 2.0\% = \12.47 (\$.35) Curbside Trash $\$6.50 + \$1.00 + \$7.50$ Total for average residential customer $\$2.90$ per month. On November 11 the first budget public hearing will be held. On November 26 will hold the second budget public hearing. The budget will be on the December 9th meeting agenda for council consideration.

- **West Point Development Authority Appointment**

Josh Moon's term ends December 31st on the West Point Development Authority. There are three applicants that have completed a Statement of Interest to Serve a five-year term: Jamie Welch, Carter Brown, and Micheal Coniglio. The appointment of one applicant will be on the meeting agenda for council consideration.

- **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds**

We received $\$1,395,532.00$ in American Rescue Plan Funds in 2021 and 2022 from the state for COVID replacement. Each entity had to oblige funds and enter into a contract by the year end of 2024. The city originally wanted to use funds towards the water infrastructure project. As we have further discussions with the Corp of Engineers, we have determined the project contract will not start in time to use these funds. The city may make a budget amendment to allocate funds to 2023 and 2024 salaries to keep from losing those funds. All past years of reporting have been completed. A resolution to reallocate funds will be on the meeting agenda for council consideration.

- **Property Tax Reform House Bill 581**

City Manager Ed Moon discussed Property Tax Reform HB 581 will take effect January 1, 2025. There are concerns from the Georgia Legislature about increasing property values and property taxes. Assessments need to be controlled creating Floating Homestead Exemption House Bill 581. The council has the option to opt-in or opt-out. No action is required if the council decides to opt-in. If decided to opt-out the council is required to have a series of three public hearings, approve a resolution, and file with the Secretary of State by March 1, 2025. Things to consider are HB 581 will reward the residential homeowners, there will not be an immediate reduction in tax revenue, possible tax shift to other property types, possible tax inequities with similar homes, the general assembly can pass a local act through referendum to put a local floating homestead in our city.

- **Executive Session to discuss Personnel**

Mayor Steve Tramell asked for a motion to enter an Executive Session to discuss Personnel. Councilmember Joseph R. Downs III made said motion, seconded by Councilmember Gloria R. Marshall; **passed unanimously.**

Mayor Steve Tramell asked for a motion to exit the Executive Session. Councilmember Joseph R. Downs III made said motion, seconded by Councilmember Sandra Thornton; **passed unanimously.**

Other

Mayor Tramell reminded everyone that there are 125 meals that will be given out on Thanksgiving from 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM, location MLK and 10th Street, meals prepared by Rogers BBQ.

Economic Development Director Meghan Richardson reminded everyone of the West Point Christmas Tree Lighting on December 2 at 5:30 PM, in J. Smith Lanier Park. There will be an EV9 Kia vehicle that will light the tree, cookies, hot chocolate, and caroling.

Councilmember Sandra Thornton wanted to invite everyone to Chattahoochee Hospice for a grief counseling meeting on December 11 at 12:30 PM. They will be serving desserts and is free for the public.

The next Business Meeting December 9, 2024 5:30p.m.

- Amendment to EZ Blockchain Agreement
- Rezoning & Annexation at 523 Warner Road
- 2025 Proposed City Budget
- West Point Development Authority Appointment
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds
- Property Tax Reform HB 581

ADJOURN

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.