

City of Santa Claus, Georgia
Regular Monthly Council Meeting

November 19, 2024

The regular meeting of the Santa Claus City Council was held November 19, 2024. Present were Mayor Donita Bowen, Councilmembers Renee Wright, Monte Powell, Matt Lynn, Vince Meadows, Joey Thigpen, Dustin Kidd, and Sue Grisham. Brenda Sells was listening on line as she was out of town. The meeting began with the group reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Minutes of October 15, 2024, meeting were read. Renee made a motion second by Monte to accept the minutes as read. Minutes were accepted as read.

Old Business: The financial reports were reviewed by the Council and discussed. Gardens: Brenda has contacted an electrician to replace or repair the 50 lights in the Garden and to check the chandelier at the Community Center. Luis has moved the bench broken by hurricane Helene and a new end will be needed for it. Park: Monte stated there were no issues. Community Center: Porch ceiling panels have not been replaced yet and Renee stated that she will ask her husband, Walter, to check on this. Roads: No new issues. Matt moved the cabinet purchased for the "Little Library" to storage for now as it still needs some work. Donita stated that the certified letter sent to Cliff Duerfeldt was returned unclaimed and she will inquire further with Attorney Tina Maddox on the next step to deal with this issue.

Joey asked for an update on the resurfacing of the streets project which was discussed. He stated he disagrees on the closing of Salem ST as he and others ride their kids back there for entertainment. Vince stated that, in the past, he was told the street needs to be open as a school bus route. Donita said that she will inquire on the bus route issue.

New Business: As required by the state, Matt will need training as a new councilmember. However, the March class in Athens is full so he will be attending at a later date. The new signs to post at the Walking Trail have been received and we will ask Luis Nino to install them. Donita has met with Michael Carrol of Triton Fire & Security about more security cameras at the Pavilion at the Park, she stated. Michael will install them when he receives them. This is funded by the safety grant.

Mr. Bill Powell met with the mayor and interested parties at the Community Center on Thursday, 11/07/24. He explained his analysis of the water & sewer systems rates we currently have and for his recommendation for increased rates to operate the water and sewer systems within budget. Rates will be addressed in January. The 2024 property tax notices will be completed and mailed out by Harris in the next few days, Donita added.

November 19, 2024 meeting -page 2- Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission submitted our request to the Department of Community Affairs for a variance in the process completion deadline and requested the 10/31/24 deadline be extended. The extension was approved for 2/28/25. The mayor stated she met with Lyons City Clerk, Lynn Rowland, who assisted her in filling out Homestead Tax Relief Grant. This has been mailed requesting a grant of \$1,916.67 and we are waiting the approval.

A reminder of the upcoming activities for the Christmas season was discussed as: Christmas Tree Lighting on Thursday, 11/21 & Christmas Family Supper on Thursday, December 5. The Lyons Christmas Parade is Friday, December 6 which the mayor & Brenda Sells will be riding in to represent the city.

Donita and Toombs County Manager John Jones met with Chad Bowman of FEMA Floodplain on 11/13/24. Mr. Bowman informed them of the steps to take to be eligible for any assistance from FEMA concerning floods. Emily Wingo of EPD assisted the mayor in submitting the necessary documents. A Resolution of Intent must be signed by the city in order for residents to receive FEMA assistance at no cost to the city. However, if the Resolution of Intent is not filed by the city, residents will not be eligible for FEMA assistance.

Republic Services, the trash collector, notified the city there will be an increase of 4.8% effective January 1, 2025. Council discussed the debris removal and other Helene damages at length. After the storm, Luis Nino the city landscaper, removed the downed trees from city properties to his private property. Hopefully, this will be removed by the debris trucks. John Morris came out and assessed the fence around the lift station that was destroyed. Donita has talked with ER Assist Services who will clear other areas including the woods of private properties following an agreement with the property owners. There is the possibility that an easement will be cleared in the woods below the park where the main water line was ruptured by a fallen oak tree causing the city to suffer low water pressure.

GIRMA came out and assessed all damages incurred by the city from Hurricane Helene on September 27, 2024. We are waiting for the final report on their assessment. Resurfacing on all city roads was discussed. Debris from the shoulders must be removed by 1/06/25 to proceed with the resurfacing. Council was reminded that there would be no council meeting in December. Council will meet for a work shop to discuss the 2025 budget. Donita stated that she has learned a generator for the well for city water could cost approximately \$55,000.00. Lynn Moore, Toombs EMA Director is presently working with the city of Lyons and Donita on behalf of our city for future water needs.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted, Sue Grisham

Donita Bowen, Mayor Donita Bowen