

CITY OF SANTA CLAUS COUNCIL MEETING
January 21, 2025
AGENDA

7:00 – PM – CALL MEETING TO ORDER ROLL CALL

- PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- READING OF MINUTES/APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES
- COMMENTS/PUBLIC ISSUES
- FINANCIAL REPORT (Hand out)

1. COUNCIL AGENDA /ISSUES/WORK UPDATES:

GARDEN - Brenda Sells - Updates?

PARK - Monte Powell - Updates?

COMMUNITY CENTER - Update?

ROADS AND APPEARANCE - Update?

2. OLD BUSINESS:

- Have the electrician look at the chandelier in the community center and see if he can determine why, it keeps blowing bulbs in certain areas. Also have him add an outlet to the area at flag poles for lighting Santa and any other lights.
- We've received the envelope back for Mr. Duerfeldt as time allows, I'll try to schedule a meeting with our attorney Tina, to see what we can do to get this matter resolved. I also texted him to notify him of the local debris pickups if he'd like to take advantage of using it while available ... but haven't gotten any kind of response. I tried to call Cliff again and sent another text message concerning the debris pickup - still no response.
- I filled out and submitted the FEMA Flood Plain for the city. This is to ensure that if any resident needs to submit an application with FEMA concerning Flood assistance, they will be allowed to file a claim.
- We received notice from Republic Services that they are going to increase the current rates effective January 1, 2025 by 4.8%. I responded to renew our contract with the rate increase. In light of the cost increase I propose that we go ahead and increase the trash pickup fee another dollar (\$1) to cover the increase. Hopefully they won't issue another increase next year or we'll be able to absorb the cost and hold off increasing again.

3. NEW BUSINESS:

- I've registered Matt for the 2025 Newly Elected Officials Institute training. This year's training will be held in the UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center on March 19-21. I'll reserve his room closer to the training.
- Artiffany Stanley (GMA) was to be here to present us with our Safety Grant check but we've rescheduled for next month due to the weather.
- Michael Carroll (Triton Fire & Security) installed the 2 new cameras at the pavilion. He ordered & received the remaining cameras and supplies for our safety grant. I will get with him to determine the remaining items & cost to apply to this year's safety grant. I believe that is all that we will be able to apply for this year to cover our permissible dollar amount.
- Once we discuss and pass our budget, we will adjust the amounts for this year's water & sewage rates.

CITY OF SANTA CLAUS COUNCIL MEETING

January 21, 2025

AGENDA

- DCA (Department of Community Affairs) has approved our new comprehensive plan 'One Toombs - Building one Collaboration'. I went ahead and formally accepted the plan so that we will retain our QLG status. Michelle Brown with Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission formally notified DCA of our adoption. This will retain our eligibility for state grants, loans and permits.
- I submitted our Homestead Tax Relief Grant. After inquiring on the status, I was asked to send them a copy of one of the property bills that showed the exemption amount. I had to contact Harris to get them to send me a copy. I received it and forwarded it. I received an email back stating that we have been put in the file ready to be paid. The grant approval amount is for \$1,916.67.
- HB 581 was passed during the 2024 legislative session and will bring changes to Georgia's property and local sales tax systems. Do we want to 'Opt Out' of the {floating} Homestead Exemption? HB 581 does not eliminate any existing homestead exemptions for any jurisdiction. It grants a statewide homestead exemption that limits(caps) the increases in the taxable value of homes to no more than the inflation rate that occurred over the prior year. It also allows local governments the ability to elect to opt out of this homestead exemption within their jurisdiction so that it will not apply to their taxable values. If we choose to opt out, **we must advertise and conduct 3 public hearings of intent to opt out and later adopt a resolution. MUST file a resolution to the Secretary of State by March 1, 2025. The decision to Opt Out or Stay In is Permanently set at the current time.**
- I have to set up an account for us with the Georgia Department of Labor to submit our Quarterly Tax and Wage Reports electronically. Apparently, this rule was amended and went into effect January 1, 2025. One advantage is that it should help alleviate penalties incurred when the payments weren't received on time. I'll go over everything with Shea once I have the accounts created and create some instructions to put in our Training Book in case anyone else has to do in our absence.
- I purchased a mailbox for city hall and figured we can get Clarence to put it up when he does our other task needing completion from the Hurricane. This fee will need to be kept separate from the other items to be filed for GIRMA/FEMA. I also purchased new bulbs for the office, key lock box, cash box for gift shop and a safe for keeping cash until Sue's able to make deposits. I've also purchased wreath hangers for storing the garland in the new storage building. Gotten shelf brackets for making a few shelves in the new building and also use them to hang the wreaths. Candles have been ordered also.
- The slip strips have been installed on the community center steps but I still need to take the tarp to the lift station to cover the spare pump. Waiting until we get the fence replaced.
- Larry Sikes (Sikes Bros.) and I met with the 811 utility companies concerning resurfacing the roads and them marking their areas accordingly. AT&T wasn't able to attend the meeting so I emailed him the agreement and it has been filled out and returned. Altamaha EMC and City of Lyons also attended the meeting and filled out and signed the agreements. Vyve didn't attend or contact us. Assuming Sikes Bros. will get started on the roads as weather permits. We've given him half the money to begin and will give the remainder once the job is complete. We'll also use the Roads funds (Peoples Bank) that we received from the LMIG grants. This allows us to close this account and close out the LMIG grant.

CITY OF SANTA CLAUS COUNCIL MEETING

January 21, 2025

AGENDA

- I met Friday, Jan 17, 2025 with [Zac Moore](#) to discuss us implementing a system to send mass text and/or email messages to city residents. This is to allow us to contact residents in a timely manner informing them of any upcoming events, etc. The cost will be approximately \$100 per month and a dollar or two per message. He's being kind enough to forgo the installation cost of licenses, etc. and labor at his own expense to help us since he's a resident here also. Do you approve of implementing this so he can go ahead and proceed with getting the permits, etc. and getting started?
- I contacted Luis Nino Monday morning to see if he'd make sure that the sprinkler system is turned off so that it won't come on and with the low temperatures expected for the next few days possibly kill or damage any of the plants, etc. I also asked him to check on the pipe that is coming out of the water tank to ensure that the insulation is still on there. Reminder of the Christmas Eve three years ago when we had really low temperatures and we had no water until later in the morning as the pipe froze due to not being wrapped. He contacted me later Monday afternoon and informed me that he was having to put some more insulation on the pipes.
- The issues incurred from Hurricane Helene that we're still working with ER Assist, FEMA and GIRMA are:

Community Center - Porch Ceiling Panels, Double Pane Window, Community Center sign (rehang) ... cost of any materials/supplies needed and labor cost

Garden - Trail Lights (purchased/received in process of installing); get estimate for replacing sections and installation; cost of replacement cement section of bench w/repair; stump removal possibly by Debris Tech ... hoping no further repairs needing to be done from the removal

Lift Station - replace fence (have received 1 estimate; still waiting on second and trying to schedule a 3 estimate to be able to begin replacement)

Salem - get culvert (washed out area) repaired

Park - Get metal roof damage to swing bench cover & bench repaired; get mulch estimate for covering playground area along with labor to lay it; get top soil brought in to put along sides of walking trail to assist with erosion (cost and installation and putting down grass/seed to help also); have Debris Tech remove stumps located on walking trail - then have Sikes Bros. resurface the damaged section of the trail caused by hurricane

Signs and post - have received estimates for the various signs/post with labor from Darel (Lyons) but I've asked him to change the 30x30 stop signs to 24x24 as those are the ones that we had. I've also asked him to add the 4 Keep Right signs also as he didn't include them. I'll also give the park signs to Darel so they can install them when they're doing the others. As soon as I get the updated estimate, I'll pass it along to ER Assist for them to use on our FEMA submission.

****GIRMA** came and did an assessment of the damage and sent us the items that we need to get repair estimates for. We can proceed with emergency and minor repairs. We just need to forward estimates and invoices to their staff. I still need to contact GIRMA to determine the status of the older storage buildings as they weren't included in the items, they requested further information on and they were damaged. Also, it appears we will need to have the accessors make an additional site visit to look at the lift station fence again as the estimate that we've already received is over their \$10,000 limit ... It's \$17,960. I talked with Darel Monday afternoon and he's going to see if he can get the fence guy that they're working with to see if he'll come out and give us an estimate for the lift station fence also.

- 2025 Operating Budget – need to review and approve