Council Work Session

July 19, 2022

Mayor Harley called meeting to order at 5:00pm

Invocation given by Mayor Harley

Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilman Wright.

Welcome extended to all by Mayor Harley.

Present were Mayor John R. Harley, Councilman Robert D. Bird, Jr., Councilman Justin Wright, Councilman J. Micheal Evans, Councilman Edward Armijo. Absent City Attorney Rebecca Tydings and Clerk Krista Bedingfield (viewing on live feed Centerville Ga FB-transcribing minutes).

Motion to add item to agenda made by Councilman Evans- Point of Information Police Department-Chief Duncan; seconded by Councilman Armijo. Motion carried.

Public Comments

Randall Wright, 108 Virginia Drive, stated concerns about the agenda not being available online prior to meetings, been having an issue for the last 4 months. Has contacted office and inquired, told technical difficulties but then resolves within the hour. Concerned of transparency and open-door policy to citizens.

Adoption of Minutes: Blanket motion made by Councilman Bird to adopt minutes as written; seconded by Councilman Evans. Motion carried.

* June 7, 2022
* June 21, 2022 Council Work Session

Old Business

New Business

Point of Information Police Department- Vehicles are in stock and ready for purchase; Reminded Mayor and Council of (3) vehicles that were in the FY 2023 budget. They are available and ready for purchase. No motion or action taken.

Home Based Business-Jeremy Johnson (owner) 293 Collins Ave, Centerville, Ga. 31028: Councilman Bird explained type of business, motion made to approve; seconded by Councilman Armijo. Motion carried.

Proposed Councilman over Departments July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023: Mayor Harley stated he had sent this out to everyone as proposed. No issues from Council. Mayor Harley entertained motion. Motion made by Councilman Wright; seconded by Councilman Bird. Motion carried.

2022 Millage Rate/Approval to Proceed: Councilman Bird recognized City Accountant Harrison. Mrs. Harrison provided all forms that are presented in the presentation. PT 32.1 computation of the millage rate with roll back rate and supporting documents proposed tax levy and 5-year history. Also, provided a comparison with current rate vs roll back rate. Wanted to provide a history since 2012 on property taxes, provided 2-year interval then consecutive years. Has been pretty flat or constant since 2012. Presentation provided revenues, tax digest values, increase, and history of millage rate, have not proposed millage rate. Provided a history in presentation, some have looked at this year and the roll back rate, revenue would be somewhat equivalent to break even, we would be able to make our budget with that roll back rate. Current rate 11.944, provided options 1, 2 and 3. In the last two Fiscal Year Budgets, have had Cares Act and AARPA funds, this will go away in 2025. Seeking direction tonight from Mayor and Council, if we adopt anything other than the roll back rate10.364, this would be an increase. Therefore, would require advertising of public hearings and press release, time sensitive, prior to adoption of millage rate.

Mayor Harley stated that looking at the information presented the taxes have been flat, however other things continue to go up. Informed all that Councilman Wright had inquired if we still transfer funds from Water and Sewer to help balance budget. Mayor Harley asked Mrs. Harrison the question, she confirmed “yes” some funds.

Councilman Wright stated that he thinks we have separate issues to consider. Senior exemption is much broader conversation. Maybe we need to turn our attention towards that in 2025. The budget committee put together a very solid budget and concise budget for this year. if we chose the roll back rate there would be $ 32,000 less in revenue from last year. If we don’t adopt the roll back, it would be considered an increase, a lot of head ache for $ 32,000- (3) public hearings are required. The overall budget is 14 million dollars. Expressed concern, sure we are talking about a long term, just wonder if it’s worth it, just because we can, would make it easier on the citizens, need to factor this into the decision. Mentioned current inflation and potential to go over budget. Citizens are also struggling due to high prices.

Mrs. Harrison stated that she didn’t think we would go over dramatically over budget, but have money on the table, do know we will experience a 9% increase in our health insurance, potential OBEP Trust, increase in staff in certain departments, that is not in current budget; future 2-3 years. Take these things into consideration.

Councilman Evans stated that revenues are to provide services for the citizens, whether this is using the rollback rate or an increase. The funds which are not used in this budget year would be rolled back into the next fiscal year.

Councilman Bird reported that he had asked Mrs. Harrison for some in between numbers and she has provided (3) in between numbers; excellent information. If some are considering roll back rate or keeping current millage rate. This maybe can provide somewhere in between. Copies provided to Mayor and Council for review. Mrs. Harrison went over the handout with 3 options.

Mayor Harley stated there are some things that citizens need, Fire Truck - need (4) firefighters to increase ISO rating-benefit citizens, Police Department (4) officers, we have been staying balanced the last years. Need to plan for long term growth.

Councilman Wright stated he understands, need to plan long term. Also, think if we are wanting to increase because of inflation has made things tough.

Councilman Evans stated the cost of things are going up for everyone.

Councilman Wright doesn’t believe the solution for an average family in Centerville, is a tax increase. If we can make it through this budget year without a tax increase then we should. We can project all we want. Should be cautious when increasing taxes, at this particular time, don’t want to sound like I am being antagonistic towards Carol Harrison this is her job.

Mrs. Harrison stated she isn’t saying we need more money, only providing information for Mayor and Council.

Councilman Armijo stated he knows that Water and Sewer fund are used by every city, no stretch of the imagine, funds have been used for what the city. Also, we will continue to grow and need more staff. Moving forward that is why we have a budget committee, to discuss and plan. Because this opportunity is here to increase taxes and income to the city, certain that the citizens are going to want to know what and how we would use funds. Reminded everyone that Mrs. Harrison had mentioned we are good until 2025, with reserve funds, everything is ok. May have something to talk about in 2025. The conversation has come up before about the senior exemption, need to figure out going forward, housing will continue to grow. Expressed concern, is this the right time, families are living pay check to pay check, do not have extra funds to spare. The presentation is clear with options, again it’s something as Mayor and Council we have to vote on.

General discussion among Mayor and Council continues. Equipment costs for departments. Department heads do an excellent job.

Councilman Wright again reiterated we can make it through this budget, wisest course is to adopt the roll back rate.

Councilman Evans don’t need to use scare tactics, using tax increase, this will bring in more property tax revenue due to construction contributes to increase. Do not have a problem advertising for tax increase or explaining to citizens, not trying to make it worse for everybody, trying to provide services to citizens. Need to think about this.

Mayor Harley state we have increased the number of homes in Centerville, if we do a roll back funds go back to citizens. Mrs. Harrison stated there are a lot of variables, reassessment of existing properties, other changes of tax digest, mobile homes, and personal property.

Mayor Harley recommended having meetings advertising for tax increase. We can always have meetings and change minds and not adopt millage rate as advertised.

Motion made by Councilman Bird to advertise tax increase to with current millage rate 11.944; seconded by Councilman Evans. Mayor Harley called for vote. Councilman Wright and Councilman Armijo opposed. Motion carried.

Comments from Council

Post 1 Councilman Bird, thanked Mrs. Harrison for preparing information, really didn’t understand everything last year, but is clear now after receiving this information and wanted to publicly thank her for providing her knowledge that she shared with us.

Post 2 Councilman Wright shout out to Department hat made the IDC fantastic. great event.

Post 3 Councilman Evans the rain attempted to come in Independence Day Celebration people to started to leave, but people that started coming. KUDOS to all involved, hard work. Had a great time.

Councilman Armijo, complimented everyone involved with the Independence Day Celebration, all Department Heads saw everyone working, people were setting up, cleaning up, takes a lot to put on something like this. Aways supporting this, nice to see everyone enjoying themselves. Went to farmer’s market this weekend, fun and enjoyed everything. Reminder, do need help at the recycling center for volunteers. Everyone that comes there, always say ‘thank you”. Encouraged people to stop by and talk to them at the Recycling Center. Also going to schools and inform them about the Boy Scouts Program. Informed everyone that the Lions Club is hosting blood drive Thursday, July 21, 2022.

Mayor Harley Independence Day Celebration outstanding, best we have ever had, well organized. Do have to apologize for businesses for trash left after the event. Encouraged everyone to recycle and volunteer their time. Museum of Aviation great auction, City of Centerville donated basket for auction.

Mayor Harley adjourned meeting at 5:54pm.

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Mayor John R. Harley

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Attest by City Clerk Krista Bedingfield

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Date