

FLEMINGTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

December 12, 2017

PRESENT: Mayor Sandra Martin
Mayor Pro Tem Paul Hawkins
Council Member Donnie Smith
Council Member David Edwards
Council Member Palmer Dasher

ALSO PRESENT: Deputy Sergeant Eric Allen
City Clerk Lori Taylor

ABSENT: Council Member Gail Evans
Council Member Charles Richardson

1. The regularly scheduled meeting of the City of Flemington was called to order by Mayor Sandra Martin on Tuesday, December 12, 2017 at 4:30 p.m. in the conference room at City Hall in Flemington, GA. A quorum necessary to conduct business was visibly present.
2. Invocation by Councilman David Edwards, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. *Councilwoman Donnie Smith motioned to dispense with the reading of the minutes from the November meeting and accept them as presented. Councilman Palmer Dasher seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.*
4. Deputy Eric Allen provided council with a law enforcement report for the month of November. He noted that there were a lot of domestic calls, including six calls from the Denmark Trailer Park, and a shooting in the parking lot of the La Quinta Inn & Suites.
5. Council reviewed the City Expense Report for November. *Councilman David Edwards motioned to accept the expense report, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hawkins. All approved. Motion passed.*
6. LCPC – Gabby Hartage
 - a. Wall Sign for Nicole Newton for Perfect Portraits photography studio at 1705 E. Ogleshorpe Hwy. Ms. Hartage stated that the request is for a regular wall sign that is within the ordinance regulations. She said that it is the same type of sign that is being used at other businesses in the same building. LCPC recommended approval. *Councilman Dasher motioned to approve the sign request as presented. Councilman Edwards seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion passed to approve the sign request.*
7. Matthew Barrow – Engineering Update
 - a. 2017 Safety LMIG Project – Mr. Barrow stated that council needed to formally reject the bids that were received due to the cost being over the proposed budget. *Councilman Edwards motioned to reject the bids due to the cost being over the budget. Motion was seconded by Councilman Dasher. All approved. Motion passed.*
 - b. Capital Improvement Project list for 2018 – Mr. Barrow requested council's guidance as to what projects they want to be included on the 2018 CIP list. He suggested keeping the remaining projects on the list. Councilman Edwards asked about adding the paving of Old Sunbury Road to the list. Mayor Pro Tem Hawkins asked if we could submit the whole list instead of the three remaining items. Mr. Barrow stated that you could list any projects

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that council wants. *Mayor Pro Tem Hawkins motioned to submit the whole list for the 2018 CIP List. Motion was seconded by Councilman Edwards. All approved. Motion passed.*

8. Leah Poole – LCCVB – Ms. Poole presented council with a request to increase the Hotel/Motel Tax to 7% from the current 5%. She stated that in order to make this change, local government must adopt a resolution, specify the tax rate, identify the tourism projects and TPD purposes, specify how proceeds will be allocated, a local act must be passed by the General Assembly. After being passed and signed by the Governor, then an ordinance is created and sent to the DCA Office of Research. The current money that the CVB receives from the Hotel/Motel Tax is used for TCT (tourism, conventions, and trade shows), or marketing projects and not brick and mortar projects. The additional monies from increasing the tax would be used for TPD (tourism, product development), which includes the creation or expansion of physical attractions which are open to the public and improve the destination appeal to visitors. Attorney Craig Stafford inquired about the impact on the hoteliers. Mr. Hasit Patel spoke on behalf of the hotel owners. He stated that they were hesitant at first, but after discussing the impacts of travel and the need to promote Liberty County more effectively, they are now in favor of the increase. Ms. Poole also stated that the CVB governing board is the authority for deciding what projects would benefit from the increased money from the tax. The CVB board consists of Councilman Dasher, Mayor Allen Brown, Representative Al Williams, and Donald Lovette. Ms. Poole requested that the tax increase be approved at this council meeting so it can go forward to the General Assembly next month. Councilwoman Smith expressed some concern about none of the money being used or spent in Flemington, but instead being used throughout Liberty County. Ms. Poole stated that all projects would be approved through the CVB board, in which Flemington is represented. *Mayor Pro Tem Hawkins motioned to approve the increase of the Hotel Motel Tax to 8%, with the intent to implement 7% pending the approval of the General Assembly. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Donnie Smith. Three council members approved, Councilman Edwards did not vote. Motion passed.*
9. Hotel Appreciation – Councilman Dasher recognized the hoteliers in Flemington with a certificate of appreciation and gift of a fruit basket from the city. He stated that most of the city's revenue comes from the Hotel/Motel Tax and the city appreciates the support of the hotels. Mayor Pro Tem Hawkins also acknowledged the hotel owners for always keeping their properties clean.
10. Larry Golden – Annual Audit Report – Mr. Golden presented council with the preliminary audit report for the city. He presented council with some suggested budget adjustments in the LMIG, sanitation costs, and Hotel/Motel transfers in order to not have an unfavorable variance with the budget. Councilman Dasher expressed concerns about the City's savings, or nest-egg, moving forward with the city's growth. Mr. Golden stated that the city is moving steady along, however, the city must look to the future for increasing expenses (fire protection and sanitation) and may need to make a decision to pass the cost to the residents soon. Councilman Edwards said that the city needs to talk about the growth that is coming in the next 5-10 years now in order to be ready for the future of Flemington. He also suggested looking into a possible fee on new construction per unit to increase the City's revenue and growing the city's infrastructure. Councilman Dasher asked Mr. Golden if he had any recommendations that could benefit the city. Mr. Golden suggested passing the cost back to the residents for services that the city is currently funding. He also stated that the court fines and fees were down for this year, and that he would be looking into that to find out why they had decreased so much. He summarized by stating that there is a little bit of housekeeping with the needed adjustments, but the audit is clean and will be submitted by the year's end. *Councilwoman Smith motioned to amend the 2017 budget to reflect the suggested adjustments presented by Mr. Golden and to align the budget with the actual amounts. Motion seconded by Councilman Edwards. All approved. Motion passed.*
11. Executive Session – *Mayor Pro Tem Hawkins motioned to enter in executive session to discuss personnel. Seconded by Councilman Edwards. All approved. Motion passed. Council exited the room for executive session.*

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12. Council re-entered open session at 6:10 p.m.
13. *Mayor Pro Tem Hawkins motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:12 p.m. Second by Councilman Edwards. All agreed. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned.*