



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING  
REGULAR SESSION  
MONDAY, APRIL 5, 2021 – 7:00 PM  
Via Teleconference**

**ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

David Eady – Mayor  
George Holt – Councilmember  
James Windham – Councilmember  
Jeff Wearing – Councilmember  
Laura McCanless – Councilmember  
Avis Williams – Councilmember  
Lynn Bohanan – Councilmember

**APPOINTED/STAFF PRESENT:**

Matt Pepper – City Manager  
Marcia Brooks – City Clerk/Treasurer  
Dave Harvey – Chief of Police  
C. David Strickland – City Attorney

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Art Vinson, Laura Gafnea (Oxford College), Michael McQuaide, Dr. Lakliesha Izzard, Barbara Cole, Sarah Davis (Covington News)

1. The meeting was called to order by the Hon. David Eady, Mayor.
2. Invocation – Rev. Dr. Avis Williams.
3. **A motion was made by George Holt to accept the Agenda for April 5, 2021. James Windham seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**  
(Attachment A)
4. **A motion was made by George Holt to accept the Consent Agenda for April 5, 2021. James Windham seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**  
(Attachment B)
5. **Planning Commission Recommendations/Petitions**  
None.

Mayor Eady shared that Jon Calabria has completed a draft assessment of water quality for Dried Indian Creek based on field visits and sample analysis at several points along the corridor. He is currently doing a geomorphic assessment and conducting short-term water level logging.

Laura McCanless added that she has collected some stories from individuals telling their personal experiences with the creek. She asked meeting attendees to forward any stories they have to her, and they will be included in the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) grant application for restoration of the corridor.

Mayor Eady also provided an update on the block grant the City of Oxford is applying for. Staff are currently collecting letters and surveys from residents that live along Oxford Road in the area planned for water main replacement under this grant. The Newton County Water & Sewerage Authority and the Newton County Fire Marshal's Office have provided letters of support. Carter & Sloope is revising the initial Preliminary Engineering Report. They walked the target area with Jody Reid last week and performed some flow tests. The application is due June 4th.

Mayor Eady announced that Jody Reid and Scottie Croy have recently completed a city street assessment. They used a set of defined criteria to evaluate the streets in the City of Oxford and give them an objective rating regarding their condition and use the results for developing a schedule for repairs and maintenance. The system they are using is called PASER (Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating System). They provided the ratings to Robert Jordan, who entered the information in the PASER system to come up with recommendations.

James Windham asked if Mayor Eady could describe the criteria. Mayor Eady stated that it looks at surface deformations, cracks, potholes and patches. The information about the criteria can be shared with the City Council.

George Holt asked for details on the terms of the contract with Robert Jordan to perform these services. Mayor Eady stated that as the City's engineer Robert Jordan provides the City with engineering estimates each year for items to put in the Capital Budget. This estimate is similar. Mr. Holt stated that since this work requires a contract, we should know what is being contracted for, and we should have an idea of what we will be getting for our money. He wants to ensure that contracts are not being entered into without the knowledge of the City Council.

Mayor Eady stated that this issue can be discussed further at the City Council's April Work Session. He noted a distinction between ongoing engineering work Mr. Jordan performs for the City, as opposed to engineering for bigger projects, for which he is required to provide a separate estimate.

#### 6. **Citizen Concerns**

Art Vinson requested an update on the status of research on I-20 noise abatement efforts. Matt Pepper advised that he has asked for information from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) as to whether any assessments have been done or can be done but has not heard back from them. He will follow up with them.

Barbara Cole requested permission to place a second Little Library at Asbury Street Park. She advised that she and her husband are replacing books in the existing one almost daily. She would like to put another one there using a schoolhouse theme and separate children's books from adult books. Mayor Eady advised the City Council can discuss this proposal at the April City Council Work Session. He thanked Ms. Cole for being so diligent in checking the existing one and willing to install another one.

James Windham recommended leveraging the small things the City is doing such as noise abatement in the applications for grants to undergird what the City is striving for. He also commended the Trees, Parks and Recreation Board for eliminating the ginkgo trees in Asbury Street Park in favor of native trees that will better support wildlife.

7. **COVID-19 Update**

Marcia Brooks described the funding that is forthcoming from the American Rescue Plan Act. Based on current estimates, the City of Oxford is expected to receive over \$700,000 in two payments, one this year and one in 2022.

Matt Pepper added that the money can be used to create programs for rental and/or utility assistance, to recover revenue lost as a result of the pandemic, as an opportunity to boost salaries of first responders and healthcare personnel for work performed during the pandemic, or for water, sewer and broadband projects. The City is awaiting specific instructions from the U.S. Department of Treasury regarding specifically how the funds can be used.

Mayor Eady stated that the City has offered to host a mobile vaccination clinic for Piedmont Newton Hospital and/or the Gwinnett/Newton/Rockdale Health Department. Art Vinson suggested that perhaps a clinic could be held at the same time the farmers market is going on at the green.

8. **Yard Sale Request from Oxford Lions Club**

Mayor Eady stated that the Oxford Lions Club has had an annual community yard sale on the green each year until last year when it was cancelled due to the pandemic. They would like to have it this year on May 1 from 7:00 a.m to 2 p.m. There will likely be vendors for the farmers market on the green at the same time but there should be ample room for both events to run concurrently. Mayor Eady's initial thought was to approve the request provided the Lion's Club adheres to the City's mask mandate for City properties, ensures that individual vendors are separated adequately, and appropriate precautions are taken.

George Holt asked if social distancing is required on City property. Mayor Eady stated that masks are required on City property and social distancing is practiced, so his thought is approval of this request is conditioned on their observance of these requirements. The vendors would need to wear masks and they would need to display signs for their patrons. The City has some signs like those at Asbury Street Park that can be posted. He does not expect the City to "police" the event since it is on a Saturday. Distancing requirements are not included in the City's mandate for masks, but the City has a policy of practicing social distancing.

Laura McCanless asked if the signs are weather-proof. She suggested farmers market vendors might can display the requirements with their permits under their tents.

**Avis Williams made a motion to approve the Oxford Lions Club's request. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**

9. **City Sidewalk Project** (Attachment C)

The FY2021 Capital Budget includes \$800,000 for a project to extend the sidewalk on Emory Street from Soule Street to the northern city limits. The City Council has recently discussed modifying the parameters of the project as it was determined that extending the sidewalk all the way to the northern city limits is not a priority for the City. The amended plan is to extend the sidewalk from E. Soule Street to E. Richardson Street on the East side of Emory Street/SR 81, and W. Soule Street W. Watson Street on the West side of Emory Street/SR 81 for access to Asbury Street Park. A mid-block crossing on Emory Street /SR 81 would be included in the project as well as pedestrian lighting. A concept study for this project has been completed by Keck & Wood. Keck & Wood has provided a cost proposal of \$91,000 to prepare the engineering plans, bid documents, and contract. They would also take care of any GDOT permitting needed.

Art Vinson asked if there were competitive bids for the work proposed. Mayor Eady advised the construction work will be put out for bids, but not the engineering and design work. Mr. Vinson expressed concern that the cost is excessive considering the work proposed of telling the City where the sidewalk should go.

Mayor Eady stated that the work is much more involved than that. Keck & Wood already prepared a concept study, and this proposal is for detailed design and engineering. There is earth movement and culvert construction involved along with other measures to be incorporated into the design. The proposed work has been discussed in one or two work sessions.

George Holt pointed out that the engineering work was put out for bids when engineering services were procured for the Emory Street sidewalk. At the time Keck & Wood was the most competitive bid. Mayor Eady added that they are also very experienced in dealing with GDOT permitting and requirements.

**Laura McCanless made a motion to accept the proposal from Keck & Wood. James Windham seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**

Mayor Eady advised Mr. Vinson he would be happy to provide further information and background to him about this project offline.

10. **Emory Street Sidewalk Replacement Project** (Attachment D)

The FY 2021 Capital Budget includes \$100,000 to make repairs to the existing sidewalk that runs along the westside of Emory Street/SR 81 from the city-owned greenspace to W. Soule Street. The proposal for the work includes installation of conduit for future installation of pedestrian lighting.

After inspection of the existing sidewalk, it was determined that this section of sidewalk is in such poor condition that it needs replacing. The cost to do this work will be higher than the amount planned for in the Capital Budget, but the work is necessary. The actual amount will not be known until bids are obtained. Before bids can be obtained the plan must be submitted to GDOT for approval.

**James Windham made a motion to accept the proposal from Keck & Wood. Laura McCanless seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**

11. **City Hall Multifunction Copier** (Attachment E)

The City Council has had several discussions concerning replacement of the multi-function copier in City Hall, which was purchased in 2012. Staff obtained quotes from three vendors, two of which are on statewide contract. Staff recommends leasing the Sharp equipment at a cost savings of about \$10,000 over five years.

Mayor Eady stated that the current equipment can be repurposed for the Police Department.

George Holt asked if the City would still be paying the same maintenance cost for the current equipment. Mayor Eady advised the maintenance cost should be much less for the Police Department because their volume of copies is a small fraction of the volume generated by the City Clerk's and City Manager's office. Staff will obtain a quote for maintenance before making a final decision on the current equipment.

**George Holt made a motion to approve the contract for the Sharp multifunction equipment. James Windham seconded the motion.**

Discussion:

Laura McCanless asked for clarification on the motion as to whether it is to purchase or lease the equipment. She thought it may be advantageous to own the copier for more than five years.

Marcia Brooks stated that she had planned to let the City Council make this decision, but her personal inclination would be to lease the equipment for five years, because the cost for maintenance starts increasing once a copier gets older. With a lease, the City could have the recurring cost programmed into the budget and switch out for new equipment every five years.

**George Holt withdrew his motion pending further discussion of leasing versus purchasing.**

Mr. Windham pointed out that a lease allows the purchaser to take some action if there are any problems with the equipment, whereas a purchase has very limited recourse for any problems.

Based on the observation by Mr. Windham, **George Holt made a motion to approve leasing the Sharp multifunction copier. James Windham seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**

**12. 810 Whatcoat Lease (Attachment F)**

Oxford College has requested renewal of the lease for the building at 810 Whatcoat Street (old City Hall) effective April 1, 2021 for a term of three years. A 90-day early termination clause has been added to the contract to allow the City to pursue options for development of the property if it so determines in the future. Oxford College is amenable to this added language.

**James Windham made a motion to approve the lease. George Holt seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**

**13. Invoices (Attachment G)**

The Council reviewed the invoices paid by the City of Oxford for \$1,000 or more in March of 2021. James Windham asked if the invoice from Treadwell, Tamplin & Co. was a final bill, and which audit it pertains to. Marcia Brooks stated that this billing is for the audit they just completed for the year ended June 30, 2020, and she expects another billing for that period due to a lot of recent activity on it.

George Holt asked if the new buildings at the corner of Cook Road and Moore Street are serviced by the City of Oxford. Matt Pepper stated he thought the City serviced water that far but will verify.

There were no other questions.

**14. Executive Session**

None.

**15. Adjourn**

**A motion was made by Laura McCanless to adjourn at 8:09 p.m. James Windham seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**

Respectfully Submitted,



Marcia Brooks  
City Clerk/Treasurer