

**City of Nelson**

**Council Meeting Minutes**

September 13, 2021 @ 7:00pm

Nelson City Hall

1. **Call to Order**

Mayor Sylvia Green called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**Attendance**

The following persons were present: Mayor Sylvia Green, Councilman James Queen Councilman David Hamby, Councilman Nathan Hamby, Councilwoman Martha Tipton, Councilwoman Susan Johnston (VIA phone), Finance Manager Miranda McDowell City Clerk Kelsey Riehl and Attorney Laura Rollins.

1. **Invocation**

Mr. Stephen Johnston led the invocation.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. James Queen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. **Agenda Approval**

Mr. James Queen made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Mrs. Martha Tipton, All in favor, Vote unanimous…

**5. Public Appearance**

Ms. Penny Southerland – Kennesaw Ave. drainage project

Mr. John McElreath – Kennesaw Ave. drainage project

Mr. Michael Brown – Pickens St. basketball court

Mr. Michael Haviland – Master Park plans

**6. Public Hearing – Millage Rate – Pickens County side**

None

**7. Approval of Minutes**

a. July 12, 2021 – Mrs. Susan Johnston made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Martha Tipton, All in favor, Vote unanimous…

b. July 22, 2021 – Mrs. Martha Tipton made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Nathan Hamby, All in favor, Vote unanimous…

c. July 29, 2021 – Mrs. Martha Tipton made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mrs. Susan Johnston, All in favor, Vote unanimous…

**8. Department Reports**

a. Police Report - Lt. Darrin Downey, Cherokee County Sheriff’s Dept., reported that there were 6 calls for service.

b. Mayor’s Report – Mayor Green reported that City Hall will be closed next week and payments can be made online or left in the drop box. She went over 2 policies that will be added to the Policy book and were previously approved by Council – (Contingency Line Item & Health Insurance Stipend Policies). Mayor Green and the Council agreed upon an Oct. 21st date for a work session meeting.

c. Finance Report – Miranda McDowell went over the current bank balances and gave an update on the revenue and expenditures. She stated that the city is in very good shape financially.

**9. Unfinished Business**

a. Establish Procedure for divesting the City of the Plot at 80 Blue Ridge Ave. –

Mrs. Kelsey Riehl stated that the City has a little under $20K in the 80 Blue Ridge Ave property and the City no longer has records regarding what was spent on the 68 Blue Ridge Ave. property. She stated that the parcels have been combined to make one ½ acre parcel and she has spoken with environmental health about the possibility of someone building a house there. They would require a PERC test to determine the number of bedrooms but it would be allowed. She stated that the Attorney, Jeff Rusbridge, recommended using an agent to sell the property. Mrs. Susan Johnston agreed with the recommendation for using an agent. Mr. David Hamby asked if the City could wait to decide how to sell it and hold onto the property a little while longer. Item was tabled.

b. Use of City Property for Community Garden – 352 Blue Ridge Ave.

Mrs. Kelsey Riehl stated that several residents of Laurel Lakes would like to use this property for a garden. Mr. Stephen Johnston discussed the benefits of this parcel, specifically the amount of sun and the parking area. The Council and Mayor discussed liability issues with Attorney Laura Rollins and decided it would be fine to use the area for now.

c. Catch Basin (2) & damaged sidewalk replacement – Laurel Lake Dr. & Pickens St. –

Mrs. Kelsey Riehl stated an estimate for repairs was received from Holcomb Grading and Hauling, there is one other company that may be able to provide an estimate but they will not be able to come out until some time next week. Several other companies have been contacted by some of the Council Members, some are out of business and some do not do small jobs. The City has used this company for this type of work previously, the estimate for the repairs is $2,000 for each catch basin lid (2 lids = $4,000) and $2,000 to remove and replace the sunken sidewalk area near the catch basin on Pickens St. for a total of $6,000. The Council and Mayor discussed; Mr. David Hamby stated that it would need to be inspected during the work by Mr. Forter to ensure rebar was in place. Mr. James Queen made a motion to approve the bid, with a second from Mrs. Martha Tipton, All in favor, Vote unanimous…

d. Security Camera Changes -

Mrs. Kelsey Riehl reported that the 2 buildings that are going to be removed, Community Building and the old Police Building, both house components for the City’s security cameras. The camera company suggested having a pole installed where the Community Building is and said a pole may also work for the other location but they will have to come out to access exactly what is needed. Mayor Green requested pricing for pole installation and also stated that the current cameras that were knocked out during the storm need to be fixed. She advised having the company start the installation of the additional cameras while they are assessing what will work at the old Police building site.

e. Retaining Wall – School St. – Recommendations from Root Design-

Mrs. Kelsey Riehl reported the recommendations from Root Design were to do away with the retaining wall near the basketball court, keep the foundation of the community building and use it as a basketball court and add fencing and new goals, add a side walk to make it ADA compliant, a new set of stairs, and to put a new retaining wall near the intersection of School St. and Kennesaw Ave. with a 42” handrail. The Council and Mayor discussed the proposal and decided to schedule a meeting with Michael Kidd from Root Design and Barry Holbert from Maxis Engineering after the Community Building was removed to discuss what should be done with the area.

f. Walking Trail – Recommendations from Root Design –

Mrs. Kelsey Riehl reported on the meeting with Michael Kidd from Root Design, Mayor Green, Council Member Susan Johnston, and Council Member James Queen. Mr. Kidd discussed all of the possible options but suggested the City use “Slate Scape” which is an ADA compliant stone that compresses together forming a fairly even walking trail surface, it is easy for bike riders and strollers to maneuver over. He stated that it is fairly easy to maintain and would cost less than concrete to install. The Council and Mayor discussed the options and agreed with Mr. Kidd’s assessment and recommendation. Mr. David Hamby requested the City look into replacing or redirecting the path where the small steep bridge is located. The Council and Mayor agreed.

g. Environmental Report - Community Building & Old Police Building –

Mrs. Kelsey Riehl stated that both of the buildings came back positive for asbestos, the company that tested the buildings sent a price for abatement, Community Building $3,098.41, Old Police Building $8,006.35, this building was higher due to the glazing on the old windows testing positive for asbestos as well as the linoleum in the older section of the building. The Community Building only had asbestos in the linoleum. She asked the Council if they would like to have the asbestos removed before running the request for bid for demolition ads, since some companies may not want to deal with the abatement procedures. The Council and Mayor discussed and decided to have the asbestos removed before the demolition and asked for additional price quotes before the next meeting.

**10. New Business**

a. Coronavirus State and Local Recovery Grant Funds (up to $514,222.00)

Mrs. Miranda McDowell stated the City qualified for $514,222.00, we have already received $257,111.00 of those funds. She stated there are required reporting dates that have to be followed and the funds have to be allocated and spent by 2026. The Council and Mayor discussed the possible uses for the Grant, Mayor Green stated she planned on forming a committee to represent all of the different parts of Nelson to help decide how to spend the funds. She also stated she would contact the GMA and try to have a teleconference with one of their representatives to give the City more information on the funds.

b. New bank account for upcoming Coronavirus State and Local Recovery Funds –

(aka- CSFRF / CLRFR, or Fiscal Recovery Funds) Mrs. Miranda McDowell stated the City needed to open an additional account for the grant funds but needed Council approval. Mr. James Queen made a motion to open an account for the grant funds, seconded by Mr. David Hamby, All in favor, Vote unanimous…

c. Additional Street Lights on Ray Mountain Rd. & Old Nelson Rd. –

Mrs. Kelsey Riehl reported several residents on Ray Mountain Rd and one on Old Nelson Rd. have requested additional street lights be installed for safety reasons. Amicalola EMC has identified several places on Ray Mountain Rd. where they could be placed on the poles but they have not had time to check Old Nelson Rd. There is not a charge for the installation of the light and the monthly cost is minimal. Mr. David Hamby made a motion to approve the additional lights, seconded by Mr. James Queen, All in favor, Vote unanimous…

d. Tree Removal Hwy 5 –

Mrs. Kelsey Riehl stated there are numerous trees on Hwy 5 that will need to be removed soon but 2 of them near the entrance of Laurel Lake are in serious danger of falling at any time which could be a liability for the City. The City received 3 estimates ranging from $800 - $1500, the lowest was from Gonzalez Tree Service in Ellijay. The Council discussed the estimates. Mr. David Hamby made a motion to approve Gonzalez Tree Service for $800 with the condition that the City receives a copy of their insurance paperwork and the trees would be removed in the next couple of weeks, if not then the City would go with the next estimate, Prather’s Tree Service for $1200, Seconded by Mr. James Queen, All in favor, Vote unanimous…

e. Millage Rate – Pickens County side of Nelson

Mrs. Miranda McDowell stated the proposed millage rate for 2021 is 1.146, this is considered a rollback from last years rate of 1.160. Mr. James Queen made a motion to approve the millage rate of 1.146, seconded by Mrs. Martha Tipton, All in favor, Vote unanimous…

f. IGA – Cherokee County – road resurfacing

Mrs. Kelsey Riehl stated that Cherokee Co. sent pricing to resurface Kennesaw Ave., Baker Street, and Nelson Oaks Dr. The total estimated cost is approx. $98,734.60. The County also sent an IGA for the project if approved by Council. The Council and Mayor discussed and all agreed that it was a very good price. Mr. David Hamby made a motion to approve the IGA with Cherokee Co for the road resurfacing projects, seconded by Mr. James Queen, All in favor, Vote unanimous...

Mrs. Martha Tipton made a motion to approve the estimated cost of the project $98,734.60, Seconded by Mr. David Hamby, All in favor, Vote unanimous…

**11. Adjourn**

Mr. David Hamby made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. James Queen, All in favor, Vote unanimous…

Mayor Sylvia Green adjourned the meeting at 9:01

Minutes submitted by Kelsey Riehl

Minutes approved by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_