



BROOKS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES

October 21, 2024

Council Member Scott Israel led the Invocation, Mayor Langford let the Pledge, then called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor: Daniel Langford

Council Members Present: Ted Britt
Kay Brumbelow
Brian Davis
Scott Israel
Todd Speer

The proposed Agenda for Monday, October 21, 2024, was emailed to the Mayor and Council Members for review before tonight's meeting. It was brought to Mayor Langford's attention that Jennifer Burr, listed under the section of "Any Other Business," no longer needs to speak at the meeting. Mayor Langford asked for a motion to update the agenda, reflecting that Jennifer Burr would be omitted from the agenda; Council Member Todd Speer made a motion to approve the agenda omitting Jennifer Burr; Council Member Ted Britt seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

The draft Council Meeting Minutes for Monday, September 19, 2024, were emailed to the Mayor and Council Members for review before tonight's meeting. Mayor Langford asked for a motion to approve the Council Minutes; Council Member Kay Brumbelow made a motion to approve the September 19, 2024, minutes, as presented; Council Member Scott Israel seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Introduction of Catherine Remkes – Candidate for FC School Board District 5

Catherine Remkes introduced herself as a candidate for the Fayette County School Board District 5. She stated she was a former teacher for fifteen years, substituting at McIntosh and White Water High School. She believes it's vital for teachers to be on the school board. She is a Brooks resident just outside the town limits and enjoys participating in the Brooks Market with their family business, Ringlet Farms.

Brief Overview of the Fayette County Emergency Management Agency

Council Member Brian Davis presented a presentation from the Newnan F-4 2021 disaster that showed how resources are utilized and allocated in an emergency. The presentation was given due to recent inquiries by residents stemming from Hurricane Helene. It showed response procedures for prior and post-emergency states. The town has intergovernmental agreements with the county, police, fire, and public works, and we, the town, are prepared and lined up with all the local municipalities to be ready in the event of an emergency.

Public Hearing: - Opened at 7:24 p.m. / Closed at 7:45 p.m.

First Reading – Ordinance to Limit Vehicular Traffic on Gable Rd.

M. Ungaro reviewed the proposed Ordinance 2024-02, an ordinance prohibiting all trucks over FHWA Class 3 on Gable Rd, between McIntosh Rd and Hwy 85 Connector, to repeal a conflicting ordinance, provide an effective date, and for other purposes.

The prohibition of vehicles over FHWA class 3 is to provide for a safe and controlled environment that allows citizens and other individuals to operate motor vehicles, bicycles, and other forms of personal transportation and/or engage in pedestrian activities on Gable Rd, between McIntosh Rd and Hwy 85 Connector. M. Ungaro defined Class 3 vehicles as any vehicle between 10,001 and 14,000 lbs., which would then prohibit large semi-trucks with trailers as the road is only ten feet wide.

No action is to be taken this evening. The next reading will be at the November 18, 2024, 6:30 p.m. Council Meeting.

Second Reading – Proposed Amendment of the Fiscal Year End 2024 Budget

Mayor Langford stated that a town or city must always amend its budget at the end of the year to match what occurred. The FY2024 budget ended on June 30, 2024.

L. Spohr reviewed the proposed amendment of the fiscal year-end 2024 budget presentation, citing the adopted budget of \$404,447 for revenue, which ended the year at \$499,643, an addition of \$95,196. The adopted budget of \$404,447 for expenses ended the year at \$426,030, an overage of \$21,583, resulting in an unaudited proposed amount of \$73,613 to be added to the Fund Balance. LMIG restricted funds had a budget of \$15,000 for revenue, which ended the year at \$41,315, an addition of \$26,315; no expenses were incurred during FY2024 for LMIG, resulting in an unaudited amount of \$41,315 in restricted LMIG funds.

Fund Balance projections for FY2024 will add \$73,613 to the FY2023 audited amount of \$394,154, resulting in an unaudited FY2024 fund balance of \$467,767, which equates to approximately eleven months of fund balance.

Second Reading - Notice of Property Tax Increase / 2024 Millage Rate

L. Spohr presented a presentation on the 2024 Tax Digest/Millage Rate. The presentation explained what a millage rate was and how it is calculated. It showed the five-year tax history and the value of one mill for 2024 (\$54,978). L. Spohr presented millage values for 1.207 mills (\$66,358) and a rollback rate of 1.129 mills (\$62,070). 1.207 mills would provide additional revenue of \$4,748 vs 1.129 mills would provide additional revenue of \$460. The FY2025 approved budget amount for property tax is \$61,610. The presentation provided information on how property taxes are calculated and the exemptions that homeowners who occupy their homes can apply for in person at the Tax Commissioner's Office. Comparisons of the 1.129 millage rate vs the 1.207 millage rate were provided on six homes. No action is to be taken this evening; the final public hearing for the notice of Property Tax Increase / 2024 Millage Rate will be held on Wednesday, October 23, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.

Mayor Langford asked L. Spohr if the town's fund balance of eleven months meant the town could operate for eleven months; L. Spohr said yes.

Mayor Langford discussed the HB581 bill, which is currently on the ballot to be approved by voters. The bill would grant a statewide homestead exemption that limits the increases in the taxable value of homes to no more than the inflation rate that occurred over the prior year (CPI), which could affect next year's property tax revenue.

Mayor Langford asked if there were any questions from the council or the public regarding the proposed ordinance to limit vehicular traffic on Gable Rd, or the proposed amendment of the FY2024 Budget, and/or the notice of property tax increase / 2024 millage rate.

Mayor Langford asked those who would like to comment or ask questions to please state their name and address.

Resident Aaron Edge—113 W McIntosh Rd—I see two different numbers on the revenue, not specifically tax, but rental income; from the budget amendments, it states \$37,524. Do you have the rental property revenue broken down? The dollar amount seems low. Do you have an explanation as to why? Is someone directly in charge of marketing for the rental properties, as the income seems low? Instead of raising taxes, it looks like an opportunity is being missed with the rental properties. Also, what is the appraisal value of the three properties at \$600k, and would it be possible to get comparable numbers for the rental of the three properties? What about doing more marketing for Hardy Hall and the Chapel?

L. Spohr replied to Mr. Edge that the \$37,524 was received vs. what was initially adopted, that approximately \$26k is received for cell tower rental; Lee Mize pays \$325.00 monthly for rent. The chapel is rented for one day or two (\$250 vs. \$350), and Hardy Hall is rented at \$160.00 per day. The dollar amounts aren't low; they could possibly be higher if the Town allowed alcohol. Lee Mize's rent was raised each of the last two years, and he pays one year in advance. The appraisals for the properties were just received and are available upon request. We will investigate comps for the properties.

Mayor Langford stated that Mr. Mize has been renting for twenty-something years, and the rent is almost at market rate; we keep the others lower (Hardy Hall & Chapel) than what the market might bear because so many Brooks residents use them, and it benefits those in the community.

Philip Bradley – 130 Brooks Rd – What impact would having alcohol have on our insurance policy?

L. Spohr replied that she would check into it but reminded everyone that the insurance company's most recent increase was 14.9% for no additional services.

Jason Banks—It is a great point about the marketing. I know these facilities are here, but I have no clue how to rent them.

Further discussion from residents on how people don't know about the hall or chapel or how it can be rented was expressed in the meeting.

L. Spohr replied that all of the information regarding the rentals of Hardy Hall and the Chapel is on the Town's website and will look into additional marketing ideas and making a brochure.

Mayor Langford asked if there were any comments or discussions on the 2024 millage rate or the ordinance for Gable Rd.

Jason Banks—243 Brooks Rd—the ordinance - I think it's crazy for any driver with a large tractor-trailer to try to come through that area, but if the ordinance is approved, will it be just signage, or is there current signage?

M. Ungaro replied that there is no current signage. If approved, signage will be posted, and the sheriff's office will be notified so they can ticket anyone they catch. We can't put one up without passing an ordinance.

Mayor Langford asked if there were any other comments by the Council or the public; hearing none, Mayor Langford closed the public hearing at 7:54 p.m.

Old Business:

Proposed Amendment of the Fiscal Year End 2024 Budget – Resolution 2024-005

Mayor Langford said the next item on the agenda is the proposed FY2024 budget and the resolution to adopt it. We discussed the FY2024 proposed amendment in the public hearings, and L. Spohr presented before the public hearing, again amending last year's budget to conform with what was taken and spent for the previous fiscal year. We do not have control over this, as we must match the dollars to the financials. That is all we are doing, so is there a motion with respect to that?

Council Member Brian Davis made a motion to approve the adoption of the amended FY2024 budget; Council Member Scott Israel seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Committee Reports:

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Langford reported attending two mayoral breakfast meetings this month and two meetings with town staff.

Planning and Zoning:

M. Ungaro stated there was nothing to report at this time.

Recreation:

Chris Moody stated there was nothing to report at this time.

Library:

K. Bradley reported that the Brooks Library is going well. Another cemetery lot was sold, leaving four lots available for purchase in addition to cremation lots.

Town Clerk Report:

L. Spohr reported that trash bills were mailed out on the first of October, with a due date of October 31st. With Kim's assistance in sorting the trash bills by address and PO Box, the post office appears to have delivered them promptly, as payments were being received quicker than in the past.

Finance Officer's Report:

L. Spohr reviewed the September financials. LOST revenue for September is up 18.43% compared to last September, and LOST YTD is up 8.81% compared to the previous year. 2023 SPLOST for August was up 17.04% compared to last August, and YTD 2023 SPLOST is up 4.84%.

Town Manager Report:

Transportation:

M. Ungaro reported meeting with Liberty Tech to discuss alternative access. They are very interested in this solution but have no budget for it. They are going to try to find some grant funding to assist financially.

There was another wreck at the Hwy 85/Morgan Mill intersection. The wreck was bad enough for EMS to be on the scene. To that end, the intersection generates enough input on the SS4A online process to start the process of being recommended as a federally funded improvement location. I encourage everyone to visit the survey site.

The interactive map allows users to pinpoint exactly where the concern is located. Users can also identify intersection problems, problematic stretches of road, etc. This site will be active until October 28th. Also, on the 29th, there will be the second public open house. This one will be held at the Tyrone Town Hall from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Staff will have the online map available for citizens to access points of concern and comment.

Water Outage:

On October 28, the Fayette County Water System will be replacing the meter on the 6” main that supplies water to the entirety of Brooks. They have informed us that the water will be off from 09:00 AM to 3:00 PM for a scheduled meter change in Brooks. This interruption will affect both residents and businesses in the area. Please make sure that you are prepared to weather the interruption that day.

Brooks Market:

The Market had a great turnout, and most vendors reported very good sales. We may have been at maximum vendor capacity, too. The vibe was great; if you missed it, it showed true community activity.

Any Other Business:

None

Adjourn:

With no further business to discuss this evening, Mayor Langford requested a motion to adjourn. Council Member Ted Britt made a motion to adjourn, and Council Member Scott Israel seconded it. The vote was unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lorey Spohr
Town Clerk