City of Thomasville Council Meeting, September 24, 2018

The Council of the City of Thomasville met in regular session with Mayor Greg Hobbs presiding and the following Councilmembers present: Mayor Pro Tem Terry Scott, Councilmembers Jay Flowers, David Hufstetler, and Todd Mobley. Also present were the Interim City Manager, Kha McDonald; Asst. Utilities Superintendent, Chris White; City Attorney, Tim Sanders; Honorary Councilmember Clara Clifton, other staff, members of the press and citizens. The meeting was held in Council Chambers at 144 East Jackson Street in Thomasville, Georgia.

Mayor Hobbs called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Councilmember Flowers gave the invocation. Mayor Pro Tem Scott led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

On motion of Mayor Pro Tem Scott, and seconded by Councilmember Flowers, the minutes of the Called City Council meeting held on September 5, 2018 were unanimously approved as presented.

On motion of Councilmember Mobley, and seconded by Councilmember Hufstetler, the minutes of the Regular City Council meeting held on September 10, 2018 were unanimously approved as presented.

On motion of Councilmember Flowers, and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Scott, the minutes of the Called City Council meeting held on September 18, were unanimously approved as presented.

On motion of Councilmember Mobley, and seconded by mayor Pro Tem Scott, the minutes of the Called Council meeting held on September 19, were unanimously approved as presented.

Mayor Hobbs opened the meeting to citizens to be heard on non-agenda items. Don Atkinson, 202 North Hill Drive, Thomasville, Georgia addressed Council and noted he retired from the City of Thomasville after thirty-seven-and-a-half years of service; the last twelve of those years was served as the Assistant City Manager of Utilities. Atkinson commended all City of Thomasville staff on their efforts, accomplishments and service that is provided to the community. Stating there was a lot of history and tradition at the City of Thomasville, he noted many of those accomplishments and successes would not be possible without the vision, the risk and “can do attitudes” of staff providing basic governmental services and utilities. Atkinson briefly reviewed 100+ years of history of the current, city-owned, utilities and reported the City of Thomasville has long been labeled as a full service city; where other municipalities were not as fortunate. Atkinson continued and stated that since 2012 the City of Thomasville has had zero ad valorem taxes. He further explained for many years, the City of Thomasville operated as two agencies as General Government and Utilities. Atkinson reported operating as two separate entities created numerous internal challenges for the City of Thomasville. He further reported one of the biggest accomplishments made by the City of Thomasville was the consolidation of the two agencies. Following that consolidation, Atkinson conveyed the consolidation ultimately resulted in the City of Thomasville Team that is currently in place. He noted Council’s recent discussions of returning to the separation of Utilities and General Government will create difficulties and continued challenges. Atkinson concluded by conveying to Council that the progression of Team Thomasville should remain consolidated and under the common leadership of one City Manager.

Wallace Goodman, resident of Thomasville, addressed Council and verbally provided a listing of concerns and allegations of certain current Councilmembers. Among the items listed by Goodman were concerns of how the Roses property was transferred to the Payroll Development Authority, the dismissal of knowledgeable advice regarding the management structure for Utilities which was given by Interim Utilities Superintendent Keith Bass upon his departure, the disregard for the wishes of constituents regarding South Pinetree Boulevard road improvements, the disregard of current travel policies, allegations of forgery by staff, concerns of pending lawsuits and appearances of forced resignations of former City
Manager and City Engineer. Goodman concluded his listing of concerns with allegation of recent actions to cease the employment of the current Chief of Police.

There being no more citizens to be heard, Council moved on to the printed agenda. Mayor Hobbs reported there were no items for discussion under Old Business and moved to items of New Business.

Assistant Chief of Police, Eric Hampton, reported Frida’s By Coyoacan of Georgia, Inc., DBA-Frida’s Mexican Restaurant located at 116 North Broad Street, Thomasville Georgia, and owner/applicant Fernando A. Pena Martinez, had submitted applications for licenses to engage in the business of selling beer and wine and liquor pouring privileges at the listed location. Hampton further reported the background check and fingerprinting showed no issues or concerns that would prohibit the approval of the licenses as requested.

On motion of Mayor Pro Tem Scott, and seconded by Councilmember Hufstetler, Council unanimously approved the Application for License to Engage in the Business of selling Beer and Wine for Frida’s By Coyoacan of Georgia, Inc., DBA-Frida’s Mexican Restaurant located at 116 North Broad Street, Thomasville Georgia, by owner/applicant Fernando A. Pena Martinez.

On motion of Councilmember Flowers, and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Scott, Council unanimously approved the Application for License to Engage in the Business of selling Beer and Wine for Frida’s By Coyoacan of Georgia, Inc., DBA-Frida’s Mexican Restaurant located at 116 North Broad Street, Thomasville Georgia, by owner/applicant Fernando A. Pena Martinez.

Mayor Hobbs reminded Mr. Martinez of the importance of adhering to the City’s ordinances regarding Alcoholic Beverages and congratulated him on the anticipated opening of the restaurant.

Council considered a motion to approve the proposed annual salary for Municipal Court Judge and Solicitor. City Attorney Sanders reported a salary survey comparison had been conducted, and presented at the August 8, 2018 Council Workshop, regarding salaries of the positions. The findings were below the current average of like positions and the proposed increase was recommended.

On motion of Councilmember Mobley, and seconded by Councilmember Flowers, Council unanimously approved increasing the annual salary to $31,200.00 for the position of Municipal Court Judge, and increasing the annual salary to $23,040.00 for the position of Municipal Court Solicitor.

Attorney Sanders reported the position of Municipal Court Solicitor had been vacated with the recent resignation of Mr. Swann. It was recommended that Council approve the advertising for interested Attorney’s to submit applications and resumes, based on the Solicitor job description approved by Judge Mitchell and Chief of Police, Troy Rich. Attorney Sanders noted advertisement would include applications and/or resumes be submitted to the City of Thomasville’s Human Resources Department for processing, with subsequent submission to Council for consideration of appointment as Municipal Court Solicitor.

On motion of Councilmember Hufstetler, and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Scott, Council unanimously approved the recommended advertisement and submission process for Municipal Court Solicitor.

Council considered bids and award for the purchase of a Methane Flare and Well Field Maintenance and Monitoring Contract. Assistant Landfill Superintendent, Lee Thomas, reported the Landfill’s request to enter into a one (1) year contract with Carlson Environmental Consultants (CEC) for the maintenance and monitoring of the methane flare and gas well system. CEC originally installed the methane flare system in 2010. Well maintenance and gas well monitoring are vital to the methane flare operation to ensure that the flare and the gas wells are performing and producing methane at peak levels. It was noted the flare
system is part of a national carbon credit program and underperforming wells causes the program to lose potential revenue. Thomas further noted the contract will provide training of staff to perform the monitoring of the wells and flare system, system evaluation, and implementation of any recommended upgrades as needed. It was noted this was a sole source contract due to the specialized services performed and required. If approved the one-year contract would begin in October 2018 and end in October of 2019.

On motion of Councilmember Hufstetler, and seconded by Councilmember Flowers, Council unanimously awarded a one-year Methane Flare and Well Field Maintenance and Monitoring Contract to Carlson Environmental Consultants (CEC) in the amount of $21,600.00, utilizing budgeted funds for the services contract as presented.

Mayor Hobbs reported the City of Thomasville contracted with S. Renee Narloch & Associates to conduct an executive search for candidates for the position of City Manager. Council conducted preliminary interviews with five candidates on September 18-19, 2018. Councilmember Hufstetler moved to announce the final three candidates for the position of City Manager of the City of Thomasville. Councilmember Flowers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Hobbs announced the candidates, in no particular order, as Suzanne Sherman, Ron Rayburn and Alan Carson.

Mayor Hobbs reported during Workshop there was discussion regarding a possible amendment of items listed in the Agreed Upon Procedures Services for Mauldin & Jenkins. The item was considered as an added agenda item. Mayor Hobbs reported Workshop discussion revealed that in lieu of an amendment to the items listed, the length of time staff needed to gather information as listed for credit cards and contracts would be extended so as to allow for these items to be reported upon as requested previously.

Councilmember Flowers presented Miss Clara Clifton with a commemorative plaque for her tenure as the Honorary Councilmember. He reported Miss Clifton was part of the MacIntyre Park Middle School group that was instrumental in the implementation of plans for MacIntyre Park improvements which included an $80,000 investment in MacIntyre Park and subsequent improvements of Weston Park. Councilmembers applauded Miss Clifton for her endeavors and commended her interest in her community.

Council commended the efforts of S. Renee Narloch & Associates with their assistance in the search for candidates for City Manager. Interim City Manager McDonald noted that a final decision would not be made for fourteen days so as to allow the process of recruitment to progress with more interviews and public engagement.

Having no further discussion, the City of Thomasville Council meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Mayor, Greg Hobbs

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City Clerk

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