

MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE  
THOMASTON MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

A virtual meeting of the Thomaston Mayor and City Council was held on Tuesday, February 16, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. in the city-county meeting room of the Thomaston-Upson Government Complex.

**VIRTUAL MEETING VIA CITY OF THOMASTON YOUTUBE PAGE**

**LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCR1F8V1o6j-67nNYbOysNwg>**

Mayor Pro Tem Doug Head presided at the meeting with Councilmembers Lakeitha Reeves, Jeff Middlebrooks and Ryan Tucker. Others attending the meeting were Russell Thompson, City Manager, City Attorney DeAnn Wheeler and Chief Mike Richardson.

Mayor Pro Tem Head opened the meeting with prayer and followed with the pledge of allegiance.

Mayor Pro Tem Head presented the minutes of February 2, 2021, for approval. A motion was made by Councilmember Tucker, seconded by Councilmember Middlebrooks, to approve the minutes as written.

Those voting: Councilmember Middlebrooks – yes, Mayor Pro Tem Head – yes, Councilmember Reeves – yes, Councilmember Tucker – yes

All votes were aye. The motion carried unanimously.

Adoption of Agenda – Mayor Pro Tem presented the agenda for approval. A motion was made by Councilmember Reeves, seconded by Councilmember Middlebrooks to approve the agenda as presented.

Those voting: Councilmember Middlebrooks – yes, Mayor Pro Tem Head – yes, Councilmember Reeves – yes, Councilmember Tucker – yes

All votes were aye. The motion carried unanimously.

Recognition – Thomaston Police Department – Officer Whit Lawrence – Chief Richardson recognized Officer Whit Lawrence on his promotion to Lieutenant. Chief Richardson noted that Lt. Lawrence has been with the Police Department since 2013 and graduated from Columbus State University with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. He noted that he is a Shift Commander and he has worked with the patrol officers in training, assisted Code Enforcement and worked in Investigations. The Mayor and Council congratulated Lt. Lawrence.

City Engineer's Report.

Mr. Trey Gavin, City Engineer, noted that the USDA projects, Fire Station project, sidewalk project, second paving project, culvert on Triune Mill Road, and potholes will be repaired on Triune Mill Road. He noted that they are working on the next paving project for 2021.

#### City Manager's Report.

1. Approval of Appointments to City Committees: Historic Preservation Commission and Thomaston Tree Board – Councilmember Middlebrooks nominated to reappoint Lila Bryan to the Historic Preservation Commission and appoint Dennis Boyt to the Thomaston Tree Board. Councilmember Head nominated to appoint Claude Burgess to serve on the Historic Preservation Commission.

A motion was made by Councilmember Middlebrooks, seconded by Councilmember Reeves, to reappoint Lila Bryan to the Historic Preservation Commission; appoint Claude Burgess to the Historic Preservation Commission and appoint Dennis Boyt to serve on the Thomaston Tree Board.

Those voting: Councilmember Middlebrooks – yes, Mayor Pro Tem Head – yes, Councilmember Reeves – yes, Councilmember Tucker – yes  
All votes were aye. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Approval of Demolition of Water Department Office Building North Center Street – Mr. Thompson noted that this item was tabled at the last meeting to give TULL (Thomaston Upson Landmark Legacy) time to make a site visit to the building. He noted that Alison Uphold representative for TULL did tour the building. He noted that the building was built in 1901, but it is a unique structure they saw the issues that are in need of repair. Mr. Thompson stated that it is staff's recommendation to authorize the demolition of the building. He noted that the lowest quote received was from Thompson Trucking in the amount of \$9,000.

A motion was made Councilmember Tucker, seconded by Councilmember Middlebrooks, to approve the resolution for the demolition of the water department office building at 340 N. Center Street.

Those voting: Councilmember Middlebrooks – yes, Mayor Pro Tem Head – yes, Councilmember Reeves – yes, Councilmember Tucker – yes  
All votes were aye. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilmember Middlebrooks, seconded by Councilmember Reeves to award the demolition bid to Thompson Trucking in the amount of \$9,000 for the demolition of the water department office building at 340 N. Center Street.

Those voting: Councilmember Middlebrooks – yes, Mayor Pro Tem Head – yes, Councilmember Reeves – yes, Councilmember Tucker – yes  
All votes were aye. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Approval of Surplus Items – Thomaston Police Department – Mr. Thompson presented the list of surplus items for consideration. Chief Richardson noted that life span on the vests have expired which means they are five years or more. He noted that they offered the vest to the City Fire Department but Chief Harris did not want them. He noted that the Yatesville Volunteer Fire Department would accept some of the vests for their use. Chief Richardson noted that light bars were removed from the Fore Explorers and they do fit on the trucks. He noted that these can be sold on Govdeals.

Mr. Thompson noted that it is staff's recommendation to donate the vests to Yatesville Volunteer Fire Department and place the light bars on Govdeals.

A motion was made by Councilmember Reeves, seconded by Councilmember Middlebrooks, to declare the six (6) six ballistic vests and four (4) light bars as surplus and to approve the donation of the vests to Yatesville Volunteer Fire Department and whatever is left may be discarded and the light bars will be placed on Govdeals.

Those voting: Councilmember Middlebrooks – yes, Mayor Pro Tem Head – yes, Councilmember Reeves – yes, Councilmember Tucker – yes  
All votes were aye. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of USDA Sewer System Improvements Contract A – WPCP Upgrades / USDA Sewer System Improvements Contract B – Interceptor – Mr. Thompson noted that this project is for the plant work at Town Branch and Bell Creek facilities. He noted that the bid from LakeShore Engineering is in the amount of \$4,355,000 for improvements to the plants. He noted that the budget is short \$2.8 million dollars.

Mr. Gavin, City Engineer, referred to handout of the original scope of work dated 2016/2017 that included the following: Bell Creek WWTF Rehab, Town Branch WWTF Rehab, Sewer Rehab, Lift Station Rehab, of which the total estimated project cost was \$4,990,000. The USDA loan was approved late in 2018 in the amount of \$1,954,000 with a 40-year loan, USDA grant in the amount of \$2,559,000 and City participation at \$454,500. He noted that in 2019 asked for an amendment to the USDA to modify the scope of work to reflect the most pressing needs facing the City, Town Branch interceptor frequently overflows with sewage spills, the underground pipe on Hwy 19 shows the pipe to be 18" of which we need the pipe at 30". Mr. Gavin noted that the new scope accepted by USDA in late 2019 and early 2020 that included; Bell Creek Rehab, Town Branch Rehab, and Town Branch Interceptor Rehab (24") with a total cost \$6,589,000. He noted that USDA did not participate in the additional grant or loan which resulted in a \$2,076,000 shortfall. Mr. Gavin noted that when the bids received in January 2021 the total bid for

sewer plants was \$4,355,000, total bid for the Town Branch interceptor (30") was \$2,596,366 and the total construction cost is \$6,951,366 and with a total projected project cost at \$7,830,389.00. He noted that we did receive \$500,000 One Georgia Grant, but the total short fall is \$2,817,3889.

Mr. Gavin recommended to Council to consider funding the full amount of the project. Mr. Thompson noted that currently we have \$2.8 million in sales tax that can be used for some of the funding.

Mr. Joyce, Finance Director, presented a debt schedule that listed the active GEFA loans and revenue bonds. He noted that the current debt from the GEFA loans and revenue bonds is \$11,195,884. He noted that new debt number would \$14,849,884 (adding \$1.7 million to \$1.9 million USDA), cash available \$2,761,186 end of 2020, EBITDA \$2,131,000 in 2019, Operating Revenues estimated end of 2020 \$5,422,287, Expenses estimated end of 2020 \$3,585,915, Debt service per year estimated end of 2020 \$1,100,000 and debt service with new debt estimated end of 2020 \$1,242,000.

Mr. Joyce noted that the number of cash days that the City has on hand is around 281 days which is good. He noted that if Council were to raise the water rate the total water billing for 2020 was \$2,978,604, the amount needed for the debt service is \$150,000, the rate increase needed is 5.04%, water rate residential/commercial \$7.43, new rate \$7.80, difference per 1,000 gallons \$0.37, average consumption residential 4.29, and average bill increase residential per month \$1.61.

After discussion, Mr. Thompson noted that it is staff's recommendation to authorize the award of Contracts A and B contingent upon approval from USDA.

A motion was made by Councilmember Tucker, seconded by Councilmember Middlebrooks, to approve the Contract A bid from Lakeshore Engineering in the amount of \$4,355,000 for improvements to the sewer plants contingent upon approval from USDA.

Those voting: Councilmember Middlebrooks – yes, Mayor Pro Tem Head – yes, Councilmember Reeves – yes, Councilmember Tucker – yes  
All votes were aye. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilmember Middlebrooks, seconded by Councilmember Tucker, to approve the Contract B bid from United Grading and Excavating in the amount of \$2,596,366 for improvements to the interceptor contingent upon approval from USDA.

Those voting: Councilmember Middlebrooks – yes, Mayor Pro Tem Head – yes, Councilmember Reeves – yes, Councilmember Tucker – yes  
All votes were aye. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Approval of Sidewalk Contract Panel Replacement / Approval of Sidewalk Contract ADA  
Mr. Thompson noted that the scope of sidewalk on replacing sidewalk panels or corners of the sidewalks. He noted that the bid that received from Coggins Construction in the amount of \$200,644.43 which was over the budget. He noted that the City Engineer met with the contractor and was able to reduce the amount of \$54,909.26.

Mr. Thompson noted that the sidewalk for ADA improvements is \$20,000. He noted that this budgeted in the 2021 budget.

A motion was made by Councilmember Tucker, seconded by Councilmember Reeves, to approve the bid from Coggins Construction Company in the amount of \$54,909.26 for sidewalk panel improvements.

Those voting: Councilmember Middlebrooks – yes, Mayor Pro Tem Head – yes, Councilmember Reeves – yes, Councilmember Tucker – yes  
All votes were aye. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilmember Tucker, seconded by Councilmember Middlebrooks, to approve contract for ADA sidewalk improvements not to exceed \$20,000.

Those voting: Councilmember Middlebrooks – yes, Mayor Pro Tem Head – yes, Councilmember Reeves – yes, Councilmember Tucker – yes  
All votes were aye. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Discussion/Approval of Capacity Sale Agreement – MEAG – Mr. Thompson noted that the resolution would allow the City to enter into an agreement with MEAG for the sell of excess power to the City of Sandersville. He noted that the excess power capacity is 3,076 kW. The amount per kW is \$6.00.

A motion was made by Councilmember Tucker, seconded by Councilmember Middlebrooks, to approve the execution of the resolution by Mayor Pro Tem Head to enter into an agreement with MEAG Power for the sell of excess power capacity of 3,076 kW in the amount of \$6.00 per kW to the City of Sandersville.

Those voting: Councilmember Middlebrooks – yes, Mayor Pro Tem Head – yes, Councilmember Reeves – yes, Councilmember Tucker – yes  
All votes were aye. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Discussion to Rescind Power Cost Adjustment - Mr. Thompson noted that there were concerns about the power cost adjustment that was added to the utility bills. He noted that the power cost adjustment is \$1.56 per kw and was designated to the debt service with MEAG Power. He noted that this would accumulate up to \$190,000 annually.

Councilmember Middlebrooks noted he had received calls from residents about their bills. He noted that he feels that this is not the right time and we should wait. He noted that COVID has caused a lot of people to lose their jobs.

Mayor Pro Tem Head noted that it is unfortunate that there was an error in the billing but the power cost adjustment did not effect the electric rate. Mr. Thompson noted that the decimal point was in the wrong place in figuring the bills. He noted that the usage of the bills did go up due to the cold snap in December and mid-January. Mr. Joyce noted that ESG has four-meter readers and they are getting the readings done by the 15<sup>th</sup>. He noted that some bills had extra days.

Mayor Pro Tem Head that the average person paid \$3.12 or \$4.00 with the power cost adjustment. He noted that the longer we wait the more of an impact will be on the debt.

Councilmember Middlebrooks noted that we need to hold off. Councilmember Tucker suggested to wait until we get through the winter months or 90 days and then start back with the PSA.

A motion was made by Councilmember Tucker, seconded by Councilmember Middlebrooks, to suspend the power cost adjustment for 90 days or the billing cycle (February, March and April).

Those voting: Councilmember Middlebrooks – yes, Mayor Pro Tem Head – yes, Councilmember Reeves – yes, Councilmember Tucker – yes  
All votes were aye. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Discussion of Lake Thomaston – Mr. Thompson noted that he did not have a formal plan, but the City Engineer is working on a parking plan on egress/ingress on County Road. He noted that he will have the City Engineer to apply for TAP funding (Transportation Alternative Program).

Mr. Thompson asked for an executive session to discuss pending or potential litigation and real estate.

A motion was made by Councilmember Tucker, seconded by Councilmember Reeves, to go into executive session to discuss pending or potential litigation and real estate. All votes were aye. The motion carried unanimously.

Council closed the open meeting to go into an executive session at 9:06 p.m.

A motion was made by Councilmember Reeves, seconded by Councilmember Middlebrooks, to close the executive session and return to the open meeting. All votes were aye. The motion carried unanimously.

Council closed the executive session and returned to the open meeting at 9:16 p.m.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Councilmember Reeves, seconded by Councilmember Middlebrooks, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Gail Hammock

City Clerk