

MINUTES
WAYCROSS CITY COMMISSION PLANNING & INFORMATION SESSION
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2024, 5:00 P.M.
WAYCROSS CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS
(417 PENDLETON STREET, WAYCROSS, GA)

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Planning and Information Session of the City of Waycross was called to order on Monday, November 4, 2024, at 5:00 pm by Mayor James. The meeting was held in the Commission Chambers of City Hall. Present were Commissioners Diane Hopkins, Katrena Felder, Sheinita Bennett and Mayor Pro Temp, Alvin Nelson.

A. Invocation: Mayor Michael-Angelo James

Invocation lead by the Mayor

B. Pledge of Allegiance

II. GUESTS:

Doctor Earl Martin, 902 Elizabeth Street, Waycross Ga. 31501- spoke on the traffic that in his opinion is increasing. He is concerned about citizens who walk to cross from side to side and safety.

Tim Peacock, 906 Euclid, Waycross Ga. 31501- spoke on his opinion of the Ethics Board.

III. TRAVEL/TRAINING SCHEDULE AND REQUESTS

IV. PLANNING & INFORMATION SESSION

A. Bids:

1. WAYX 25-01 Surplus – 20 Cell Phones 2 Hot spots and 1985 Nissan Forklift

There was a consensus to place on Tuesday agenda for approval. District 2-yes, District 3-yes, District 4-yes and District 5-yes.

2. Bid #FY25-03 25ft Boom Mower

There was a consensus to place on Tuesday agenda for approval. District 2-yes, District 3-yes, District 4-yes and District 5-yes.

B. Discussion Items: *****SEE DISCUSSION NOTES*****

1. Finance Update

- a. Pay Raise Presentation

Per City Manager, just a conversation starter. Something to get the commission to think on.

2. Infrastructure
 - a. Roads Update
 - b. TSPLOST
 - c. Parks
3. Chief Cox-Stop Sign Evaluation
4. Jason Rubenbauer - WWDA Board Nomination Request
5. Employee Morale
6. Patrick Simmons - Commissioner Communications Procedure
7. Use of C.C. McCray Auditorium

C. Privilege Licenses Renewals:

1. (Name Correction) USFOUR LLC dba Stephens Venue, A. Nelson, 773 Osie Davis Parkway, Waycross Ga. 31501, Beer, Wine and Liquor, Consumption on Premises Only.
2. Friendly Express #50, D. Turner, 1720 Memorial Drive. Waycross, Ga. 31501, Beer and Wine Package Sales Only
3. Friendly Express #103, D. Turner, 1811 S. Ga Parkway, Waycross, Ga. 31503, Beer and Wine Package Sales Only
4. Friendly Express #107, D. Turner, 227 Pendleton St. Waycross, Ga. 31501, Beer and Wine Package Sales Only
5. George's Liquor Store, R. Patel, 2401 ½ Plant Ave. Waycross, Ga. 31501, Beer, Wine and Liquor, Package Sales Only
6. Shree Hari Krupa LLC dba Solar Food 26, N. Patel, 2198 Brunel St., Waycross, Ga. 31503, Beer, Wine Package Sales Only
7. Jay Eklingi LLC, V. Trivedi, 1302 Sweat Street, Waycross, Ga. 31501, Beer, Wine Package Sales Only
8. Daksh Oil LLC, dba Petro Station, H. Bawa, 1001 South Georgia Parkway East, Waycross Ga. 31501, Beer, Wine Package Sales Only

D. Privilege Licenses: n/a

E. Proposed Ordinances: n/a

F. Proposed Resolutions:

1. A Resolution of the City Waycross, Georgia, To Approve Holiday Calendar for Calendar Year 2025

There was a consensus to place this on Tuesday agenda.

2. A Resolution of the City of Waycross, Georgia, To Declare 20 Cell Phones, 2 Hot Spots And A 1985 Nissan Forklift To Be Surplused Property; To Provide For Sale On Gov Deals.Com; and for Other Purposes.

There was a consensus to place this on Tuesday agenda.

3. A Resolution of The City of Waycross, Georgia, To Approve Purchase of A New Tractor and 25' Boom Mower For Public Works: and for Other Purposes.

There was a consensus to place this on Tuesday agenda.

G. City Attorney Report:

H. City Managers Report:

I. Last Call

J. Adjourn to Executive Session

Motion to go into executive session was made by, Mayor Pro Temp, Alvin Nelson for the purpose of Personnel. Seconded by Commissioner Felder. All voted in favor and the meeting ended at 6:03 to go into executive session.

K. Adjournment

CITY OF WAYCROSS

BY:



MICHAEL-ANGELO JAMES, Mayor

ATTEST:



JACQUALINE POWELL, City Clerk



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CITY MANAGER: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. At this time, we have no training scheduled or requests. We're moving to the planning information session, starting with the bids by procurement officer, Miss Jackson.

MAMIE: Mr. mayor, commissioners Hutchison has two items before you this this afternoon. The first one is for surplus items. We have 20 cell phones, two hotspots and one 1995 Nissan Forklift. That we are asking to surplus so that we can sell the cell phones and hotspots on gov deals, and we can sell the forklift for scrap metal.

MAYOR: Commission, you heard the proposal for surplus. We'll go by each district. District two. Yes. District three. Yes. District four. Yes, sir. And district five. Yes.

MAMIE: The second item before the commission is for a 25-foot boom mower of Partizan. We received five bids of the lowest and best bid came from Dixon Tractor Company of Blackshear, Georgia. Of public works asked for this boom mower so that they can, uh, increase their productivity. uh, when, uh, when mowing the ditches. Um, and the lowest and best bid was from Dixon Tractor Company, uh, for \$217,995.

MAYOR: Commission, you've heard the request.

MAYOR: And see what you can say is district two. Yes, sir. District three? Yes, and yes. And district five? Yes, sir. Okay. Thank you. You want to add these to our agenda as well?

CITY MANAGER: Thank you, Miss Jackson. Uh, Mr. Mayor, we're moving to our discussion items. We have seven, and we'll start with the finance update. Um, the pay raise presentation, which I will conduct myself with them moving to an infrastructure that will be briefed by engineer department, engineering team. Then we'll move into our stop sign evaluation. Uh, Chief Cox and then, uh, Miss Rubin, I will present the board nominations, uh, requests, and then we'll go into a discussion. Uh, then our Mr. Simmons, our director of technology, will present the communications, uh, procedures, and then we'll close out with the use of the CC McRae auditorium. And I will start with the pay raise presentation. Mr. mayor, I'm conducting this pay raise presentation. Um, just to be a conversation starter. As I stated, once the budget got passed, we would start discussing these items that, um, from the commission, um, after reading recent newspaper that said, it's very important to them as far as raising the pay of our employees, I thought it was important to do it this way, because I want to make sure that everybody has the where everybody is coming from the same information, meaning our citizens and our workforce, because unfortunately, everybody does not understand this process as far as raising pay. Um, it cannot be in the same equivalence as, um, I would say industry. You know, if you Ford Motors, if they want to raise salaries, they can just add on that cost to their product or they can just cut personnel. So those are things that we cannot do. Um, currently or if we did do them, uh, they would be hard choices by the commission. And as I mentioned, uh, doing some of the finance briefings to just give the commission a little bit of grace because this will take some hard decisions moving forward. Uh, if some of this has to happen, uh, as you all know, um, this previous budget, uh, we gave the workforce. You gave the workforce a 2.5%, uh, initial Cola adjustment and then another 1% at a later time, uh, which came to 3.5%. Uh, this is not in line with what would be considered the CPI adjustment model as far as growth, as far as wages, we should be in the area of between 3 to 6%. Um, just to be compared with other cities of the same size, same scale, same scope. Um, so that would be the goal. Um, right now, if we did nothing except cut back on certain areas, I am comfortable with saying we could

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maintain a 3 to 4%, uh, cola adjustment. But ideally, we would like to get in that three. 3 to 6%, um, area at some point in time. Uh, I have mentioned in the past about things we could do, but for this time right now, I do want to make sure that I present the main problem, so everybody understands it. So I'm going to start there. So, um, as you know, we're not like the federal government or industry. We have to have a balanced budget. We can't just do stuff because we want to or we like to, or it feels good. We have to have a balanced budget, meaning revenue and expenses must equal out. So we can't over extend ourselves with our budgets to do this. In regard to pay raises, the first topic would be revenue and how we generate revenue or how we create revenue. And I'm going to do a quick model before I, because I really want to make sure that I just do something very basic to make sure everybody kind of understands, you know, it's just not as easy as giving people pay raises, no matter how much they deserve them, um, or how much they want them. Because as you all know, we all recognize and I'm sure the citizens recognize the workforce deserves a bump in pay. So just so everybody understands this, you know, this is going to take a quick presentation, guys. You know, make sure we all get this because like I said this is a hard choice. And it has to be kicked down the road some time and some years. Um, depending on how the economy was, it was an easy choice because we had additional funding because we were not operating the Covid years. We now all understand that moving forward. Um, you know, with the way everything is now, we won't have the flexibility to just do stuff unless we have a true plan in place. Um, so I missed a few times before. So just for the public to see. So they all kind of understand, um, when the time comes to make these decisions, maybe they got they have a better picture. So revenue, you know, we bring revenue in through a few ways. Um, of course, our taxes. And I got up here on the screen for the citizens to see because what most concerns them are going to be property taxes and sales tax, income tax to a certain degree, and certain fees and fines. Now we do create revenue from other services, but they're kind of self-producing. Uh, these are the main things that citizens kind of when they say I pay my taxes, this is what they're talking about. Well, my taxes pay for this. So and great point. But um, this does go into those taxes do go into the revenue or not revenue but go to the majority of the general fund to pay for our workforce. I'm going to pause that. Everybody got the question so far. Make sure everybody's good. Okay. So with that note, if you see the revenue, you got three big bands on here before we even start. Half of our revenue goes to our workforce for their salaries and their benefits packages. We're almost have I think it's 49% up there. So off the jump, half goes there before we do anything. Or if we do nothing, it goes there. And then from there it's kind of um, broke down to and this, this, this pie chart could be looked at different ways. I kind of broke it down to these areas. But, um, we got the, of course, the salaries. And then it goes kind of into our contracts and our services and the others and taxes like that. But it's other little things in there. But I wanted to focus on these three big, these four big areas so it can make it simpler for everybody. So those are some watching on TV once again revenue. Three big bands. You got two choices. If we're going to raise the salaries of our workforce. We figure out a way to make more revenue coming to the big container. And we've talked about this a few times of raising some utilities. Um, or raising some fees and fines or getting the CPI model, things of that nature. But the big takeaway is if we're going to just do the minimum, then we got to figure out a way to get more revenue in here. And unfortunately, we haven't really gone down that road yet. But this is the first hard test we've got to figure out what do we want to do to increase revenue? If we can't do revenue, then we got to figure out another way. And that goes to that part down there about divesting and investing. So divesting means move away from other operational tasks. So going to this first pool will be workforce salaries and benefits package. And these are some things that we know we can't do. But we're in the corporate world or other organizations. They would do these things. They would cut benefits. They do it all the time. We all know we're not going to do that to our workforce, or they will reduce the workforce. That has been done here many times.

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You've heard me say quite a few times how big the. I keep forgetting how big I used to be for the.

JAMES SMART: 30 employees at. One time in highways and streets.

CITY MANAGER: And we are. How many now?

JAMES SMART: 9 or 10. Yeah.

CITY MANAGER: So. And those were made. And once again, we're going to get those commissions. Grace. They had to find a way to cut funding or gain funding depending how you look at it. So they made those hard choices back then. But since that time, we've constantly not constantly, but sometimes we have divested the workforce by shrinking the workforce. Now, it might have been a reason for that. That might have been there wasn't a reason for that. But what I'm saying now on these on these tough decisions now we're going to divest. That means cut back more on positions. And this is not a bad thing, because if we can bridge technology and find a way to do stuff, find a way for one person to do two people's job, then that's actually investing. If we can find that that happy medium. But regardless, if we don't figure out a way to bring revenue, the first way to do this is going to be to kind of move back from the size and scale and scope of the workforce. Any questions so far, Mr. Mayor? Yes. Okay. So or and that's one of the ways to do it. Or we can increase our

other operational expenses. You know, during this last storm I want to say we and Mr. Smart, you get how many gallons of gas did we go over for the budget for diesel.

JAMES SMART: We actually spent almost \$12,000 in diesel just to keep the generators going. Yeah.

CITY MANAGER: So once again, not budgeted for. And unfortunately, that's going to become our reality moving forward because we've had a storm since I've been every year a major storm that impacted our budget. So I just start asking myself, what can we divest. Divestment. Operation wise. Contract wise. Here to ensure that those things that continue to come up don't put us in a significant disadvantage financially budget wise. So one thing I'm looking at, I mentioned this all the time about benchmarking. You know, if we're going to spend 10,000 gallons of gas every summer to cut our areas, that means the parks, the right of ways and things of that nature. We might figure out a way to get down to \$8,000 worth of gas. That means cutting less well, in some cases not cutting at all, and just returning that portion of whatever it is back to nature. Uh, we've many commissioners have mentioned other cities doing that, but that's something we have to do. So what I'm trying to articulate now, before I get back to my slide is like, either we increase revenue or we decrease the expenses hard tax, but we can't just throw stuff out in the air that we don't want to, you know, give people raises because we do want to do those things. We've got to have these conversations. So, um, and go back to the divestment investing. Um, stated down at the bottom also divestment. You've heard me talk about why are we harping so hard on getting this new technology up? Uh, as far as our software system, you know, we lose a lot of money because we're behind on times, just simply on software, just doing simple mitigations or collections. We're like five years behind on collections because we didn't have a way to do it. Our software is too outdated. So when we do invest in our new software, what we are doing then that's going to bring us new revenue, the same way we fix this immediate situation and get the property on the meters that will give us

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more revenue. So we do have options. But with that being said, um, the main options to kind of really, uh, get this going is to raise some of those taxes, some of those fees, some of those services. I won't go into that right now, but I do want to put that out to make sure that everybody clearly understands how this works, because, as you know, we have a lot of, um, citizens and people that work for us who don't understand, and I don't want them to walk around angry because they think we're doing nothing when that's not the case. We're trying to really figure this out because whatever we all decide to do, it's got to be sustainable for a long period of time. And we all know how stuff fluctuates. We can have another storm come in back-to-back, and then we're in the same boat again. Maybe to maybe not be able to pay those rates to be put out there. So I want to kind of do that real quick, Mr. Mayor. I didn't want to pour the water because I didn't want to spill over on this nice quick when we got. But I really want to say that because like I said, we got articles in the newspaper and the other things we've said that kind of go against what I feel like we're trying to do. And I think I agree with this many times before about the importance of figuring out increased revenue. So I'm going to pause there for any questions about this quick presentation on pay raises and just know we are right now. And we did get behind because of various reasons, but me and the directors are all working, trying to figure out better ways to tackle this. And in some cases, like I said, some stuff is built in already, and that's some of the incentives for some employees who can get additional training or who can get degrees. They don't have to wait on us to get them raises. They can do that themselves automatically. And then on the other part of that is working with the directors. We're trying to find ways to cut costs. Uh, that's why the public works director is in the hopper so hard about staying with scheduling and mismarketing, because he's trying to figure out how much gas can I kind of save if I just stay on my schedule or change how we cut and how or how we move stuff like that. So, uh, that's being worked behind the scenes. And then, um, in some other cases, I'm looking at just kind of creating some, some buffers between some of the management level and the worker level, because we got to kind of, you know, push folks to be better. So we're trying to make those incentives a little bit better, too. Um, there's more in our fire department and our police department, but it kind of applies everywhere. So we are looking at ways to be creative. And as I speak before, of course, doing the utilization, you know, rate study and all those other things and the CPI model and all those things. But I just want to make sure that this is clear across the board that it's not just as simple as giving them a raise and keep going, because we will bankrupt the city operational wise. And that won't be fair. Um, to the citizens at the same time, for the service that we have to kind of cut, that we just start giving raise without raising the revenue. And I apologize, Mr. Mayor, for any questions or concerns to that brief.

FELDER: Yes, sir

FELDER: Mr. City Manager, I thank you for your presentation. You mentioned the rates that it was recently raised over 2000, correct? Yes. Um, when were those of those?

CITY MANAGER: So, unfortunately the GMA. I forget his name and he live in Valdosta, and he has I think he had some house damage. So we haven't been able to contact him. I do know we owe him a few more documents and we got behind as well during the storm, but he's pretty much complete with the race study. And actually, I wouldn't call it a race study. It's more of a adjustment. Um, as I mentioned before, you know, Waycross, our citizens pay more than our commercial rates, and that's kind of it should be inverted the other way. Uh, meaning a big business where the meter is bigger should probably be paying more than the typical citizen. Once we get that inversion back the right way, that's going to lower those individual citizens on the lower end who kind of don't have money. It should actually lower their rates as far as

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water consumption. If we just bump up the rates as far as our big industry. So you'll see that in the presentation. Uh, once it gets back, uh, it's the same the same data that our, um, our finance, finance, our engineering, and finance department mentioned when they get a briefing, the same concept you want to right size the conversion rate so that those that use more water pay for more water. So hopefully I'll have that to you. We'll check again tomorrow just to see what his status is and when he can get it to us. And then, um, hopefully we have it on the next agenda for your consideration.

FELDER: Thank you.

For.

The question, Mr. Mayor. Our district.

HOPKINS: When we did the right study, commercial and Residential.

CITY MANAGER: I can hear you on commercial.

HOPKINS: When we did the study, they were doing commercial and residential.

CITY MANAGER: We did. Correct. We did.

Not come back.

CITY MANAGER: And so we did the initial rate study conducted by engineer their department, and they were recommending we do a second one about GMA. Um, and like I said when I looked at the presentation, they are the same. It's just it produces the same data that our commercial rates should be higher than our residential rates. And we convert the other way so it's the same data. But um, like I said I didn't get the full presentation from the GMA, but once they get it to me, I just bring both of those presentations back to the commission for consideration. And they kind of go from there. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Uh, next, Mr. Mayor, we're going to move into an infrastructure update by our department. Uh, Mr. Charlie Bridges, he'll talk about a rolling update for our paving. Uh, as far as the dirt roads and the street roads, um, from two spots and the parks update. And after he's done his presentation, I'm going to provide a few more updates in regard to the discussion we had about how to spend the remaining money that was left over on the slots.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: Good evening, everybody. Thank you for having me. Um, we'll start with the roads update. If you'll remember, we bid out both a resurfacing project and a dirt road improvements project. Um, and ESG engineering was involved in the resurfacing project. And just to refresh the commission's memory, uh, we had a low bidder of East Coast asphalt that came in at 2.5 million. Our budget for this particular project was roughly 4.5 million, which left us about 1.9 million in our resurfacing budget. And so that that contract has been awarded. East coast. Um, we have those contracts back signed by the contractor, and they're going to forward them to the city attorney for his review. And at that point, will fully execute those contracts, and then we'll have a pre-construction meeting and issue a notice of award to a contractor and get started. That should be in the next 2 to 3 weeks. The dirt road project was actually designed by John Humphrey. Um, that I'm not sure of the bid amount on that one, but the status of that project is is the same as the resurfacing project. Those contracts are back signed from the contractor. They're under review by the city attorney or will be reviewed by

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the city attorney. And at that point, they will schedule. We'll schedule a pre-construction meeting and issue a notice to proceed. Same time frame. Um, the parks project, if you'll remember, we came in over budget on that one. And I'll just remind the commission of some numbers. Uh, our grant amount was roughly 2.2 million, with a match amount committed by the city of 393,000, which gives us a total budget of 2.5, almost \$2.6 million. Our bid amounts. The low bidder came in at 3.4 million. And so in the last few weeks, I've been in meetings with the contractor to to value engineer and try to get our project back within budget. The contractor had several suggestions how to reduce scope or in some cases remove scope, largely to reduce scope at all three parts. And I provided a summary of that to the to the city manager. And he and I are scheduled to review that and make sure everybody understands where we are. And then we'll get back with the commission as to what those recommendations are from the contractor. And make sure nobody has any questions.

MAYOR: If you have any questions of Mr. Bridges. .

MAYOR: Tell me what you said again.

HOPKINS: The matching part of the city.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: It's for the parks project. It's a 300 \$393,150.

HOPKINS: 2.2 million, 2.2. Yes, ma'am. So that \$2.3 million. Uh.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: No, ma'am. We're going to get that total budget. Our project down under the budget amount. So it'll be the 2.5 or less. Okay. You're matching funds will Remain the same. Yes, ma'am. Uh, Bailey Street Park, Elizabeth Park and Garlington Park are the three parts that were applied for. I missed many chances down. So as he mentioned, we were under budget for the paving roads and this will be the next road was, I think Scriven's, uh, scriblings would be more than that. At 1.9 million. Leftover. We had leftover, we had 1.97. The estimate on Screven Ave. is roughly 2.6 through the whole road.

CITY MANAGER: So. And I did, um, mention to the commission about maybe doing the next four streets on the list. Or we could try to make that money, work on Screven Ave., and stay in line with the agreement of, um, the, the data and, um, and our robotics data that we voted on. So I'm inquiring now question now, uh, does the commission have a preference? Um, we can figure out how to make scripts work with that 1.9, I think, but we don't want to have to do it, especially once you open it up and look at the internals inside as far as the drainage. Or we can move on to the I think it's 4 or 5 more streets.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: It was right at five G Street. Norwood Jones. Where in Palm Beach or the next one? Yeah. So, um.

CITY MANAGER: We just ask you now, um, I guess can we get a consensus? Is it a one, or do you need more data before you make that decision? Or could we go ahead and make a decision now and just move forward so we can go ahead, and we've got to rebuild this? Um, regardless, because of the amount of money that at 1.9 million, we got to rebuild that regardless. Um, can't just add it to the current project.

MAYOR: Okay, let me ask one question. The question regarding that. You're saying that 1.9 million is what we have left? Yes. And then the experiment would be 1.6, what you think.

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CITY MANAGER: No, it would be 2.2, 2.6, 2.6.

MAYOR: Yes, sir. So then you're saying rather than to do the 2.6 because we'd be under or over, and then we would rather do the smaller streets which you mentioned the five of them. Correct. Would that fall into fall within that scope? Yes. Yes. That was just my first idea.

BENNETT: , let's do the smaller streets.

MAYOR: The question, I think, was more or less, what do we want to do? Do we want to go ahead and try to split it? But it appears that split is going to be more than we have. But we do have enough that we can dispense and disperse amongst the other streets. And we're just trying to find out what the Commission wants to do. If we can give him the authority that you have, that.

You tell us that.

Yes. See those streets for.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: The next five streets on the list are or G Street. Norwood Street, Jones Square and Palm Beach. For the next five streets on the robotics list.

HOPKINS: Good question. So on the robot, list. Those are mostly. I don't know what those are Either, but I don't think none of them. 4 or 5. You haven't done enough. In those areas.

CITY MANAGER: Yeah. I believe two of those are in district four.

Which ones?

CITY MANAGER: I can't be sure. I remember we did pull that up. I'm pretty sure two of them are in district four.

CITY MANAGER: Yeah,.

MAYOR: I know you mentioned where you stand. Yeah. Yes.

I mean, I know where it's at. Yeah.

But I think in district four.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: No, ma'am. And just to remind everybody, the list that we're operating off of is a combination of the robotics road score, which is a road health score. And then we also considered the traffic count, and we took that data from GDOT And so it's a combination of 70 over 30 combination of road health 70% road health 30% of traffic count. And so that's how that original list was created.

HOPKINS: Okay. Atlantic, do you remember during the storm it is really bad. You can see the dirt and asphalt on it, and I don't know where it stands on the list to you.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: I don't know, ma'am, but I can find that out for you because.

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HOPKINS: That one is not good. It's worse than a dirt road. It's bad.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: And the other thing I'll remind the commission of is we. The commission decided we didn't want to do road segments, so we're doing entire roads. And it could be that there are certain sections of roads that are really bad, but if there's other sections that aren't that bad, we're using an average score for that whole thing. So it could be if there's a section that you know of that's really bad, that may be why it's not as high on the list as you think maybe it should be, but I can I can find it for you and I can let you know where it stands on the list.

CITY MANAGER: Mr. Mayor, as a reminder, we voted on this. We want to make sure we stay consistent with the rules as we had that master list. Um, but I recognize that the commission does want to change that, and we probably should be re-presenting the list again. So everybody is kind of familiar, I pointed out a few times, but if that's going to be discussing each time because it's just easier for us to kind of go on that list so they can do the engineering data as fast as possible, because that does add on a few months. Um, if we keep going back and forth with what we're going to do, um, which is worse. So recognize all the streets in Waycross are pretty bad, you know, and it's just another way to another means to fix some of them. But it's going to take time, as I mentioned, to fix all these roads. Um, and it'll be every year. It'll be the same process getting 10 to 15, probably 10 to 20 rolls done every year, depending on the funding or the funding source. So I start with district four.

MAYOR: District three is did you have any comments or questions regarding the roads?

FELDER: Um, I would just like a representation of the list, please, because it has been a while since we've reviewed that. Yes, ma'am. So I would like to update the time. Thank you. That's the only comment that I have. Thank you.

MAYOR: District five.

NELSON: I would say go with the four streets that needs to be paved.

MAYOR: So right now, we have two and then we have two that are just wanting to see. So we'll have to pause here.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: So I'll send I'll send the list to Mister Rayford and let him distribute it out to the commission.

CITY MANAGER: Thank you, Mr. Bruce. Mr. mayor, this time we're moving to a stop sign evaluation. And to preface this, we knew we had many complaints about downtown, the downtown area. Um, I know we got quite a lot of areas where people are not using the stop signs. And in this particular situation, just because of the amount of foot traffic that happens downtown. Um, I had T Cox, and the engineer created an assessment to see what we could face from stop signs to make some people slow down. Uh, this is the first area we are going throughout Red cross to look at all areas. Uh, that made some stops sign placement or other common techniques to slow people down. Um, but I did start downtown because of the number of complaints that we get daily on the cars flying through downtown area. Um, under the PD. So I'm going to turn this over to Chief Cox to kind of give you an update of what we decided to do. Yeah.

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CHIEF COX: And so as you can see, the map isn't the most comprehensive form up there, but Elizabeth and Pendleton Street. Marion. Lot. Marion. Pendleton. Tebo and Isabella and Isabella and McDonald. And, um, like I said, a lot of this is driven by three areas. Its complaint driven complaints that's been received over time. It's a little bit of data driven. And it also comes from personal observations. But, um, the reason I come to the me, my decision on the intersections pretty much now we have where hotel up and running full capacity building up on apartments at full capacity. You got 35 apartments at one on 46 apartments at the other, all which leads to increased pedestrian traffic down in our downtown area, um, increased businesses downtown. And one of the main things is our increased events that we're having, um, downtown. Just from January 1st of this year, we had, um, 33 events. Um, and with approximately five more events left in 2024 that people have turned in to applications for the resort and roads being closed down and a lot of pedestrians down in the area. Um, a lot of this leads to, um, congested parking leading to decreased visibility at intersections. Um, and so to make a long story short, we believe the Four-Way stop signs at these particular locations will increase. Um, uh, driver, a little bit of situational awareness will be, um, situational awareness to the environment. They in that will lead to lower speeds and create a little bit of traffic for the pedestrians that may be crossing. Matter of fact, we did probably about 8 or 9 months ago. We actually put a video together concerning um, um, traffic safety. And we actually use the intersection right there on Mary and Pendleton Street. Um, based on complaints and everything. That's where we decided to set up and shoot a little PSA. But that's all I have. If you got some questions.

CITY MANAGER: And, Mr. Mayor, before you give it to the commission. So one of the things we're going to do is, well, we're going to, um, striping needs to be painted as well and some of the areas. So we're going to do some, some additional striping. Um, like I said, starting downtown. But we're all looking across Waycross. We're going to do certain high visibility, you know, areas that we're aware of through the three areas that Tommy mentioned. So, um, I feel comfortable about this because I know the citizens have been complaining. And the gentleman just mentioned about corridors. Um, we are working our way up towards corridor Z as well. Um, what we can do on the side versus actual corridor Z. I just asked once again, it was on this topic right now that citizens slow down. Um, even if we, uh, if this is just slowed down and did the speed limit. All this stuff will work without us adding to it. They will just go the speed limit. 25. 35. 45. In the city of Waycross. If we can just get the, um, a citizen just to do that, a lot of these things wouldn't be needed at this time. So I must mention that, um, there is a slight cost associated because we did not budget. You know, the stop signs do cost a little bit of money to make. And then we got to break up the cement to put them down. Um, but in some situations. But right now, we feel like this is the right thing to do. Um, like I said, we'll be going through the city and other places as well, and hopefully over the next few years we'll get all the high visibility areas. Um, with either the stop signs, uh, either the additional crosswalks or the speed strips, just to keep everybody safe. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: If there is an ask, what would that be? Is there a specific ask for the commission. What would you want to hear from.

CHIEF COX: You if they had any questions or concerns about locations or what we've chosen or anything like that? Okay.

MAYOR: Any questions?

No, sir.

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FELDER: Thank you sir. Yes, sir. Um, you mentioned a slight cost associated with the high visibility areas. How much does that cost? How much are you anticipating that cost to be?

CITY MANAGER: Uh, I'll get back to you. I'm just making a point that we. I don't know now because we have to put the stop signs in the areas. You know, we might have to break up the cement that cost. I'm not aware of at this time. And we won't know until we start implementing the stop signs. Um, once I get that cost, I will let the commission know. I didn't want to do too much. That's why we're doing this small, focused area right now. And then from here, we'll kind of make a better assessment of how much we can do each time that we do it.

MAYOR: Do you have a follow up question? Commissioner.

District five. Sir.

No, sir.

CITY MANAGER: All right. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Uh, next, Mr. Mayor, we move into a nomination request by Mr. Jason Rubenbauer.

JASON RUBENBAUER: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Commissioners, uh, before you, you should have a nomination request by the Waycross-ware County, uh, Development Authority. As you are well aware, you have four representatives. On the Waycross-ware County Development Authority that represent the city. One being the mayor. And then three positions that are nominated by our board and presented to you. Uh, this is a position that was vacated by Christopher Kovacs, who was working at the hospital. And in July, he was reassigned to Jacksonville, Florida. So he had to vacate the position. We did advertise this position for a month and a half from the time of announcement through about mid-September brought, we had five applicants that were qualified by having some type of experience that ties into the industry sectors that we have in our community, and we presented these to the board of directors, and we went through vetted. Each one, made sure that they were residents of the city. And the board decided to nominate Mr. Brian Jackson to each of you for consideration and approval. The term will start once the city approves his appointment and will continue through December 31st, 2025, when applications will be opened back up prior to that date to either if he wants to serve again in his own right and own capacity, he can, or we can fill it by another qualified candidate. It's very important that when we're putting people on the white Cross Ward County Development Authority board, we don't overload the board with one industry sector versus another. We try to keep it balanced through all of our sectors to make sure we've got strong representation across the board for when we're recruiting new business and industry to the area. We've got people that are knowledgeable about all the different sectors.

MAYOR: So when you're nominating, well, he's bringing in the name Mr. Jackson, Mr. Brown Jackson, did we need to know, did the Commission need to have any questions of Mr. Bauer just to know who Mr. Jackson is? And I'll start with district two. Yes, sir. District three. No. District four.

HOPKINS: What is his occupation? He actually works for Rich CPA Corporation, which is located in Saint Simons Island. But they were formerly located here. The good thing about him not actually being in an industry here. When we're recruiting an industry that maybe can

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conflicting or competitive. He's not associated with any like industry right here in the community. Although he lives here.

HOPKINS: He does live. He lives in the city. Okay.

MAYOR: So with that, I'm going to ask for districts two through five to give permission to put that name on our agenda tomorrow so that we can give consent tonight and then a vote tomorrow. Okay. District two. Yes, sir. District three. Yes. District four. Yes. And district five. Yes, sir!

MAYOR: Thank you all. Thank you. You're welcome. Thank you. Jason.

Uh, Next. Mr. mayor, we'll move into employee morale, and, um. I just won't speak on any names or anything like that. Because legally, I just want to bring this to the attention of the commission. It has been a long few month, um, with the city and our employees for a lot of reasons. Um, some of them are, you know, living check to check. I think we recognize that. And I know we're all trying to take steps to figure that out. Um, some of them, all of them, all of us went through that recent storm. Um, so a lot of them are dealing with that. Um, we got a lot of stuff going on. Um, that that causes a lot of confusion with the workforce. And it is, um, creating an environment not conducive to us getting our jobs done. And I'm bringing to the commission now, um, because one, I want to fix it. Um, it's very important that they say openly out in the public and in front of our workforce, because I don't want them to keep thinking we do stuff behind closed doors, especially when it comes to their wellbeing and morale. I did put a statement on your desk for you to look at. There's a few more coming. Um, possibly a few more people resigning. Um, and I just think it's important now that we, uh. Mean what we say when we say we care about the workforce. And some few things I just want to bring to the attention of the commission that I've kind of said it sometimes before, but now I'm asking you. Um, you know, I'm requesting of you, uh, to really help me help our workforce. We still go to them directly for stuff. And I mentioned a few times before how that, um, put them in a certain kind of mode, especially when, um, this ties back to getting stuff done when I'm trying to stick to scheduling, and I don't know what happened before I got here. I mean, I heard rumors or whatever, but we still operate in that mode sometimes, and it's not fair to the workforce to be in fear of anybody, including myself. So I'm just asking, um, once again, we have this charter. It says how it's supposed to work. If we could all do as it says, do. Next part. Um, we're trying to really bridge technology to get things done faster. I send you my calendar on every Monday afternoon. If you're not getting it, please let me know. Um, because I'm assuming you're getting it so that you can know my whereabouts and my meetings and my interactions with citizens. So if I don't answer a phone call or text, you will know I'm in a meeting at that point in time. But if something needs to be done. This is the great thing about our app that, um, you even the commission can just take the picture of the situation, and it moves faster than me, faster than anybody here. And I'll use an example with you, Mr. Mayor, when you call me about a pothole that was already done. Um, you called me at 7:00 in the morning, and because that citizen had called at 6:00 in the morning, it already went through the system. And Mr. Smart's team had already filled the pothole. Um, for those who don't know, you know that that the app it assigns a person, uh, to whatever the complaint is immediately, once it gets down through the proper channels, uh, and it's also a better way until we get our as I mentioned earlier, our computer system updated. It's a better way for me to track what's going on, because I get a mass notification every week of everything that came through the app. So I can kind of go back and see what we did and, you know, kind of look at the time spent like that stuff. So if anybody's not comfortable with my response time and feel like I have to talk to one of the directors or

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whatever, I just say, if you want speed, that's the fastest way to do it. Um, so. And if you just want speed, um, because that does cause confusion when we send even you text both of us at the same time, it still causes confusion about when stuff should be get should get done. Um, especially if I don't necessarily answer the text myself because I am in a meeting. Um, hopefully, if you see this on my calendar and the last thing, like I said, um, it's been a trying year. I think we all recognize that for a lot of reasons. And I work for us, continues to drive on and do the many great things that they do. But it is under a lot of pressure, and I'm amazed that they still get stuff done with everything we got going on, you know, um, behind the door and in front of the door, you know, all those things that we got going on, they still get up every day and do their job to the best of their abilities. I just think we owe them better. Myself included. Um, we owe them better. You know, I know I gotta do better on short suspenses myself. Um, sometimes I get short suspenses. And you know, when I react that way and they just go better, um, and I could go on about a few other points, but if you read that, that one document, like I said, I need you all to pull back in some cases from them because it is it is putting them in a bad situation, you know, and I don't want anybody to quit. And those people work for us right now. If you're listening right now, please don't quit. We're just going through a rough spot right now. We're going to figure this out. Um, you are valued. I know y'all value their support, but if we can figure out how to stay within what the charter says, do I think that would be the first person we start and we can't do that? Then we definitely need to go revise the charter so that that's understood too, by everybody. And I'm going to stop there.

MAYOR: Any comments?

NELSON: Yes. Mr. Mayor, um, I think we need to go into executive session to address what you just said Because we don't need to lose employees over things that we should be. Should be taking care of ourselves because we are responsible. We should know our responsibilities, and we should not be asserting our authority based on titles. So, if you will, Mr. Mayor, I would like to go into executive session when this is over.

MAYOR: At the end of the motion. Yes.

CITY MANAGER: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

CITY MANAGER: Next we will move into a presentation for communications procedures. And what we'll do, we'll just, uh, after the meeting. um, Mr. Simmons will give you the, uh, your updated phones, and we're going to kind of go into why we're doing this. But once again, uh, after the storm, you know, we had the, uh, Mr. Simmons teams put out all those surveys. And, um, some of the feedback that came back is that they were not aware of what number to call in certain situations, and they might have had a previous number or a cell number or personal number. And, um, I just felt like it was best that, you know, I know sometimes I answer, I go between three phones, but then we stick with one number for our system to call, and it needs to be posted on our website. So a new citizen or a or an uninformed citizen who does not know, maybe sometime who their commissioner or you know, we have we have a new commissioner coming in here shortly probably. Did that be uh, on our website, on our Facebook page? Um, so those, those citizens, those districts can, you know, reach, reach out to their commissioners. And by doing it this way, we'll keep the same phone numbers between districts, regardless of when the commissioners come and go. Um, when you change out, if you change out, you know, 3 to 4 years. And the last part of this, it goes back to that app. Like I said, I encourage the commissioners to go ahead and, you know, dive deep into that app. And like I say, once we get our software connected to it, where you able to look at the records and

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track everything you want to track, it's going to be that much more value added. Um, but to go ahead and look at that and Mr. Simmons can walk you through the app, uh, installment and give you a tutorial on how it works, if need be, at a later date and time. But, um, we want to do this as soon as we can. The same thing with your iPads and all that

technology that you have. Um, I'm going through that right now. It's going to throw a surplus of stuff where we're not using it. But, um, I do feel like the technology is the best way to bridge some of our communications gap and some of our performance gaps. That's why I keep pushing this. And, um, because texting and calling cause sometimes, like I say, we have a lot going on and I just me personally, I can't get to the phone sometimes, you know, um, I can't see the text. But more important than that, I can see that the app working faster, as I mentioned, and then more importantly, that if we have these phone numbers posted for citizens, they will actually know what number to call and when they call them. So I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Simmons for his remarks. Mr. Rayford said just about everything I was going to say. So I must say that, uh.

PATRICK: Like you said, we decided to use the cell phones because this allows you not to have to put your personal cell phone out. But also, one of the benefits is district one. I can put this number out. And no matter who wins tomorrow, the citizens in that community already know the number to call so they can lock that number in and no matter who has that. So next year, if somebody else runs, it's the same number. They just keep that number. And like I said, it allows you from not having to use your personal cell. They know the number to use. We get a lot of calls from citizens wanting to contact their commissioner, but we sometimes we don't know which number to give out. So this allows staff to also to have the number to be able to, to give out during the storm. Like you said, you guys had tarps and MREs, but we didn't know how to tell the citizens to contact you to get a tarp. But this will allow us to be able to have a way. We're also looking at redoing the commissions page. We want to make it interactive. So if community members don't know their commissioner, whether the city or county, we're going to make it bold. They can put in their address, and it'll pop up and say, you know, Commissioner Nelson, district one, his number and his work email address so they know how to contact you. And we're also going to do that for the county, because we saw one thing we saw from the storm, a lot of people didn't know whether the mayor or the mayor of Jamestown or the mayor of Waycross. So we want to help people realize who covers what, and that map will be interactive to where they live in the county, punch it in and then pull up the chairman or that appropriate commissioner for the county. I will also just remind you not to put any of your personal information on, because again, this phone may go to the next commissioner. So you don't want any personal information. I would use my work email address. Everybody has a work email address. If you need help resetting that, let me know or put that in and set your phone up that way. Jackie has the phones and the lists. I know you guys are going to an executive session, so after that you can see Jackie and get your telephone. So we'll get that website updated probably tomorrow. And also, the website I'm sorry. The app. Any questions?

BENNETT: Mr. Simmons, I, I this is an excellent choice. I totally agree with it. Um, I also had a citizen who was trying to contact me, and they told me they left messages, and they weren't able to, um, get a response back from me because I did not know. Even during the storm, I had, um, citizens contacted me from, uh, there was one from district three and one from district four. They needed tarps. So I think it'll be an excellent idea of what they can pinpoint their commission. So thank you.

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CITY MANAGER: One last one to Mr. Mayor, because there are some, um, cybersecurity things we have been made aware of to. This is another reason we're pushing this as well, is for your open records request and how we conduct meetings. All those things, it just best if we go to, um, work cell phones versus personal cell phones. So, um, and we can discuss that if you need to in detail. Um, most modern cities have already done this, made this transition. So I

hope we make the same transition and it'll benefit not only how we work together with each other, but also giving the citizens that quick means of contact that they all require.

CITY MANAGER: Mr. Mayor in our last item. Topic use of the CC McRae auditorium. This was requested by Mr. Felder, and I'll let her open up with her concerns. And I'll speak from there if need be.

FELDER: Thank you. Thank you. Mayor. Um, I appreciate you for adding this on the agenda. Um, and the reason I asked. Was because I think that, um, there was some misinformation that was put out there in. The community regarding the use of the auditorium. And who is allowed to use that auditorium, um, for. At no charge. Versus those that are required to pay for the use of based upon the. The rental agreement. Um, that has been noted. Um, I believe as a, as a resolution and also, I believe in that charter. I didn't see it. So, could you explain that to the citizens, so that the misinformation that was put out there regarding the use of the auditorium is clarified.

CITY MANAGER: So, being transparent, I'm still not sure. Misinformation. I'll provide another statement on your on your desk there. Um, I use that feedback to calculate, um, during the budget talk, what was brought to me, what I assumed was issued. If it's not an issue or the person that got to use the auditorium for free and they did, then I would like to know what organization. And we've given you all a list multiple times of the organization. Nobody has yet to give me any feedback. If there's anybody else that way, like Commissioner said, we can go ahead and move on. Um, whoever this is that got to use it for free. And nobody, um, understands or nobody. It can be clear who that other organization person is. I've mentioned the organization that got to use it. They use it for free. How we do that. So anything City Lead Of course. You know, that's going to be at my discretion. Um, nonprofits, things of that nature. Um, the organization, that organization, the user in question. Um, like I said, we look at that information I provided you. That's why I brought that up. So it's another sheet below that. So I'm trying to get clarification there. Like I said, I just want to move on from this and I'll, you know, we can, you know, apologize to that family. Um, if we offended them in any way. Um, we did pass a resolution to conduct those events there in honor of that family. Um, but if somebody had, I'm assuming one of the commissioners had an issue with it. Um, if that's not the issue with that, then I just need to know what other organizations are we talking about? So I can just clear this up right now for the public, because, like Commissioner Felder said, we don't want any, false information out there? Well.

I understand that we.

Just continue going forward.

MAYOR: So is there a family or a group or anything that is willing to use information in this way? Um.

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FELDER: Can you clarify the misinformation? Because it is in a resolution and a Proclamation regarding that family. So I don't understand why that if the perception was put out there in the community. And it was based off of social media posts that I read by that family. Member, and I could not understand why they felt that way. Um, when the discussion about the auditorium came up, it was not directed or implied at that time. But because it is Document. No document. I think that we can just move on. Okay.

CITY MANAGER: Okay. So just to be clear, we don't have any issues with anybody using the auditorium for free. We can move on and move on. Mr. mayor, I just want to make sure that that's done.

MAYOR: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Uh, next, we'll move into privilege license renewals, and we have quite a few. And I'm going to read all these. Oh, tomorrow. Tomorrow. Okay. So we'll read all these tomorrow. And this is just catching up. Um, if you did get behind, um, because of the storm. So we're catching up and you still got eight, um, license renewals. Uh, we don't have any previous license. No proposed ordinances. Uh, the resolutions you are aware of already, as far as the calendar. Um, cell phones and the purchase of the mayor at this time, the purchase of the mall. And this time, I'll turn it over to the city attorney for his Initial report or comments.

HUEY: I don't have any. City attorney report, Mr. mayor.

CITY MANAGER: Mr. mayor, from my city manager report. Um, this this is going to tie in back to the some of the survey data that we received from the storm. Um, it felt like that the city report was probably too much every week to kind of decipher. So I am revising that again, and we're going to move that to a monthly report. And it will be a a summary of all the events that the workforce has done monthly. We're going to go ahead and change up. As you know, every day we post an update of what Public Works is doing. We're going to add the engineering department to that email as well, and then select information from the police and fire department. Uh, because based off of those, the survey data, um, we kind of we kind of centered what the citizens want to hear about. So, um, moving forward, you're going to get a, a, a daily post actually next week, a daily post of all the events that the first public works is doing and what the engineers are doing and to be select on. Select items from police and fire as far as what their um operation is for the day and that would be daily moving forward. Uh, and it will be on our Facebook page. And then we're going to put a banner up on our website. So you can go to the website and do the same thing. And for those that are subscribed to the email distribution list, you get an email saying the same thing. So those would be our three ways of communication moving forward to show our citizens what their tax dollars are doing every day. And those were the main areas that kind of force that feedback from the survey they want to know about. And once again, the city report will be monthly. Um, I'm going to add, um, the comprehensive plan to add a few more things. So it's going to be quite lengthy. Um, but if I do it monthly, that way they'll have time to really go through it. And but it will have the highlights as well, um, from the daily stuff. But it won't be. I mean, it won't be posted every day like that. So, uh, I apologize for any questions on that.

To a question. Yes sir.

No question sir.

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CITY MANAGER: Okay, Mr. Mayor, thank you. At this time, that concludes my report and I will turn it back over to you. Thank you.

MAYOR: We want to thank our city manager. For conducting the meeting tonight in. Very quick fashion. We're looking at our last call. If anyone wants to do last call tonight, I'll go ahead and do as I normally do and ask you for your district.

BENNETT: District two. As always, I want to thank each citizen that's here and this live stream for everything that you have done and us coming together during the hurricane. I thank you, and I also want to thank everybody that reached out to me on yesterday and wished me a happy birthday. Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you.

FELDER: Thank you Mayor I appreciate everyone for coming out tonight. Thank you.

Thank you for.

HOPKINS: Letting us come and speaking tonight. And we appreciate all the citizens who come to inspire this.

MAYOR: Thank you. And district five. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I want to say let's go vote. Have a good night. Thank you all for being here tonight. We're getting ready to entertain a motion to go into executive session. So moved (commissioner Felder). For Personnel Thank you. And do we have a motion in a second? Second (commissioner Nelson). So, all in favor? Aye All opposed? Motion carries. Moving into executive session.