

City of Saluda

December 11th Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

Board of Commissioners



Date 12/11/2023
Time 07:00 PM
Location Saluda Library Chambers Room

1 - Call to Order

Mayor Morgan called the meeting to order on December 11th, 2023 at 7:00 pm.

2 - Invocation

A moment of silence was observed.

3 - Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

4 - Roll Call

Attendance was taken, and those present were Mayor Tangie Morgan, Commissioner Walker, Commissioner Talbot, Commissioner Marion, Commissioner Oxtoby, City Attorney Jana Berg, City Manager Steven Orr, Assistant City Manager & Finance Officer Julie Osteen, Chief Price, City Clerk Pam Waters

5 - Agenda Additions and Deletions

None

6 - Approval or Correction of Minutes

Commissioner Marion made a motion to accept the minutes as written for November 13th 2023
Commissioner Walker seconded and all were in favor.

7 - Consent Agenda

None

8 - Public Comment

None

9 - Budget and Financial Report

Assistant City Manager & Finance Officer Julie Osteen went over the November Budget Report.

December 11, 2023

Report for: November 30, 2023

General Fund:

Property Taxes received of \$712,018

Sales tax distribution of \$51,214

Total Revenues are \$898,833.

Expenditures:

Administration:

37% of budgeted expense – below budget. Nothing unusual for the month.

Police:

\$16,347 spent on repairs:

2011 Tahoe \$4,045

2015 Dodge \$2,087

2018 Dodge \$1,845

2019 Dodge \$3,128

2010 Explorer \$2,612

5 distributions have been paid to the Saluda Fire Department for this year's Tax Levy.

47% of budgeted expenditures. 6% over budget due to liability and workers compensation premiums.

Transportation:

Repairs of \$19,219

Storm Damage \$2,200

Stump Removal \$750

Culvert repairs \$1,266

Mowing \$15,250

Streets

Laurel Mtn \$482

Henderson \$1,620

Salisbury \$2,777

Cemetery St \$1,800.00

W Columbia culvert \$6,664
Other supplies/repairs \$1,593
28% of budget

Sanitation

5 months payment to GFL for Garbage collection has been incurred.

Cultural and Recreation:

Annual insurance premiums for the library total \$2,095. Elevator inspection of \$4,600. Repairs to windowsills and painting at Library of \$10,345

Pace Park CO final inspection punch items: \$3,252

Tennis Court renovations \$33,372 \$30,000 covered by Polk County Community Foundation

No other major expenses for Cultural and Recreation.

Debt Service:

5 payments has been made to First Citizens Bank on City Hall.

Surplus at November 30 \$142,387.

Water Fund:

Total revenues received are \$275,159. Water purchases for thru November total \$95,455 which is 17 % over budget.

Anticipated surplus \$12,394.

Sewer Fund:

Total revenues \$130,469

Capital Outlay for a new WWTP chart recorder of \$2,428

Anticipated profit is \$29,313

Budget Amendments attached.

Commissioner Oxtoby made a motion to approve the Amendments as presented To increase budget \$500.00 for repairs to Dumpster Sites and \$2000.00 for Engineering Analysis at the Interstate Commissioner Marion Seconded all were in favor.

Commissioner Oxtoby made a motion to approve the Amendments as presented to the Budget Ordinance Commissioner Talbot Seconded all were in favor.

Commissioner Marion made a motion to approve the Amendments as presented for the (Audit) Financial Statement Commissioner Walker Seconded all were in favor.

10 - Public Safety Report

Participated: Clay Price

Chief Price went over his November report.

Total Miles 4652, Total Events 1011

State citations: 30 City Citations: 2, Warning Tickets: 7, Written Warning 0, Verbal: 7, Expired Registration 17, No Operators License 6, Drug paraphernalia , Possession of Narcotic/ Alcoholic Beverage 1, Registration Violation , Careless and Reckless Driving: 0, Speeding 2, Faulty Equipment 0, Driving While Impaired 1, Driving while license revoked 9, Inspection Violation 12, Stop sign violation 0, No Insurance 3, Open Container 1, Arrest , Warrants Served 4, Order for arrest served 1, Business Checks: 481, Church Checks: 68, House Checks: 38, Total Monthly Checks: 587, Written Reports/ Calls answered , Vehicle Accident 3, Larceny: 0, Breaking and Entering , Welfare Check 4, Alarm calls , Open Door , Suspicious Person/Vehicle calls 4, Assault 1, Vandalism 3, Fraud 0, Communicating Threats, Hit & Run 1, Calls Thru Police Department Phone: 78, Information only 3, Walk In Calls at the Saluda Police Department: 9, Total Monthly Written Reports: 13, Total Patrol Calls 106

11 - Outside Resources and Funds

City Manager Orr went to speak on a grant from the Polk County Beautification Commission Grant to possibly do a Mural on the outside of the library.

12 - Zoning and Planning Department Report

Nothing

13 - Administration Department Report

City Manager Orr went over the McCreery Park Phase 1A and 1B also the Tree/Brush trimming on the city's right of way.

Demolition in 1A and 1B are being done mainly by public works this will allow the contractors that will be bidding on it to see what they will be working with. Working on the ADA Ramp and the Amphitheater. We hope they will be done before the top-of-the-grade concert. The monument will be moved and placed on a two-tier pedestal. The steps will be new, and we will take the Brass name plates and put on the pedestal. Doing tree and brush trimming on the City's Right of way that should be finished soon.

14 - SDF Report

Commissioner Oxtoby went over some of the things from the December 5th meeting.

Fund Balance is 45,300.00

Visitor Center will be closed from December 31st through January 11th opening back on the 12th with new winter hours 11-3 closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Arts Festival will be May 18th

There will be a Lasagna Competition on February 3rd at the Saluda Center Tickets are 25.00 each with Teenagers less and little ones free. Also looking for 20 cooks to bring in a tray of lasagna for the Competition. Looking for sponsors to hopefully raise some money to send our teachers over to the summer immersion program.

Italian Dinner at the Orchard Inn March 14th the Blazers will have an Italian Gala Dinner with a portion of the profits coming to the sister city.

They had one cancellation for the June 1st trip the Flower Festival in Carunchio.

Mountain song has about 75 People that come in and out of the choir.

The Visitors Center signed a 5-year contract with a 2% increase per year. TDA will take over 2/3 of the Payments and will be getting the income from the posters in the visitors center to supplement some money for that.

15 - Friends of McCreery Park

Participated: Melanie Talbot

Commissioner Marion the next meeting is in January.

16 - Special Event Permit

Lynn Casey went over the Arts Festival special event permit for May 18th and asked that they be able to close Erwin Street to be able to put artists out that way. The Park would need to be done by April 1st because of all the logistics that is involved. If the park isn't done, they want to put the kid's tent in the parking lot.

Commissioner Talbot made a motion to Approve the special event permit for The Arts Festival for May 18th 2023 and approved the closing of Erwin St. Commissioner Walker seconded all were in favor.

17 - Planning Board

Commissioner Marion made a motion to approve the Renewal Application for Planning Board from Mr. John Wilkinson as presented Commissioner Talbot Seconded all were in favor.

18 - Saluda Community Land Trust

Gerard Prendergast started off by how lucky and blessed he was to live here in Saluda. we have almost doubled our land stewardship this year to close to 1100 acres. With that comes greater obligation and responsibility in terms of volunteers and hours and financial responsibilities. When someone turns their land over to us it's usually in the form of an easement there are different types of easements. We have to watch the land the way you want it watched it maybe leave it alone or we can do something on it. With that we have to walk that property every year and report on the condition of that. With this, it's a lot of pressure on volunteers because it takes a lot of time to do this and it's a good problem to have. We have been working with ADFP to purchase farmland so that farmland will stay farmland and not be developed. Henery's Nature Center showed what the sign will look like it shows what the land is a brief history and a map of it. We graveled the parking lot we had stone pillars at the entrance. There will be a big metal sign welcoming people. We have taken down a building that was ready to fall apart keeping the chimney intact because that is a historical marker. We have planted numerous native plants there with volunteers from the High School and the gardening club. We put signs up telling what the native plants are. Next year there is an old barn that we will restore for historic purposes. We're putting stone walkways and fixing retaining walls. We hope to have it open in April. We are waiting for a site plan approval from Henderson County. This past year we have spent 40,000.00 and going forward another 30,000.00. We will be doing fundraisers for it. Polk County Community Foundation has been a great help. In the Dog Park we added a silt pond there because of erosion was so bad. We did Kudzu removal and are going to try and remove the crowns. We planted a lot of flowers. Starting in January every third Thursday we will have volunteers come out and pull and clean. We just added a sidewalk. We are starting with Polk County High School they have service clubs there. The Service club is going to start walking our trails and report back what needs to be done. We hope to have a new web page up by the end of January and hope to link it to the city's page reference events and activities. These are things that compliment Saluda. The YAK players it started in the UK where people made a video about cleaning the Ocean, rivers, and streams working with the producers of the BBC made

their own 3-minute video and it's going to be a worldwide event they started filming in Uganda, Kenya, and Mexico right now Saluda is representing the entire United States. You need to watch the video and support them.

19 - Parcel S1-C7 Non-Residential or Abandoned Structure Ordinance

City Manager Orr went over Parcel S1-C7 Non-Residential or Abandoned Structure Ordinance and everything that has been done so far trying to get the property owner to comply with the ordinance.

Mr. Pace was non-compliant. We went in and removed the vehicles and cleaned up the area some. We have sent him a bunch of notices and he has not responded and not kept up with it. We have received more complaints. I have spoken with Jana because of his previous violation I'm asking for a Resolution based upon the fact we have two years of non-compliance in addition to there being an administrative hearing before that we passed another Resolution to go and demolish the house, underbrush the lot and place a lien on the lot. We will be able to sell some of the vehicles to offset the cost. This individual is non-compliant on many fronts. We have served him papers to his house and wasn't there or he won't answer the door. We had to leave them there. We will go through that process again. We need to push this to the conclusion.

Commissioner Marion, have we recouped any of our money from two years ago?

City Manager Orr No it's an ongoing action.

Commissioner Marion so is it just the house left? Is there no other option to pursue what money we spent and have it turned over to us instead of demolishing it? Are we sure that it is in teardown condition?

City Manager Orr just the house and it's not worth keeping. It was in teardown condition two years ago.

Commissioner Oxtoby the House and Land was gorgeous. But now it is in teardown condition.

Commissioner Marion, could this be like the Saluda Inn, are we pursuing it the same way as the Inn?

City Manager Orr we were trying to save the Saluda Inn were not trying to save this it has no redeemable value. The Saluda Inn had redeemable value.

Attorney Berg the threshold is the cost of repair versus the value.

Commissioner Marion where I'm going is if we take this action does, he still has the opportunity to sell it and someone and they will come in and renovate it or once we start down this road we're going to demolish it. He has until March?

City Manager Orr yes if he were to walk in on February 28th and say I'm going to sell it fine but even if he does that and turns around 15 days later nothing has happened what are we going to do? You will still have a problem piece of property and people complaining that it is degrading the valuation of their neighborhood. There are other homes in this community that are similar to this. 2024 is going to be an interesting year.

City Manager Orr read the Resolution for the Enforcement of the Non-Residential or Abandoned Structure Ordinance.

Commissioner Oxtoby made a motion to approve the Resolution for the Enforcement of the Non-Residential or Abandoned Structure Ordinance as read Commissioner Talbot seconded all were in Favor.

20 - Stormwater Feasibility Analysis and Policy Development

City Manager Orr Stormwater Feasibility Analysis and Policy Development. City Manager Orr Read the Resolution. **Commissioner Marion made a motion to approve the Resolution as read for the Stormwater Feasibility Analysis and Policy Development Commissioner Walker seconded all were in favor.**

21 - Personnel Policy

City Manager Orr went over the new Personnel Policy

Hourly-non-exempt will be required to enroll and complete 16 hours or more of job skills-related education, service training, or certification per year to qualify for a 3% merit bonus, if only 8 hours are completed then only a 1.5% merit bonus can be considered, failure to accomplish the yearly metric can be considered in the evaluation of one's position with the organization.

Hourly-Salary-Exempt (Crew Leader, Supervisor, Department Head, Manager) will be required to enroll and complete 16 hours or more of job skills-related education, service training, or certification per year to qualify for a 3% merit bonus, additionally, 8 hours of personnel, organizational, team building, or leadership education will be required of the employee for a total of 24 hours of educational requirements. If only 16 hours are completed, then only a 1.5% merit bonus can be considered. Failure to accomplish the yearly metric can be considered in the evaluation of one's position with the organization.

*** All educational courses will be pre-approved by supervisors, department heads, and managers,**

Commissioner Marion made a motion to approve the Personnel Policy as read Commissioner Walker seconded all were in favor.

22 - Closed session

City Manager Orr read the Resolution to enter a Closed Session to discuss Economic Development NCGS 143-318.11(A) (4), and NCGS 143-318.11(A) (6).

Commissioner Talbot made a motion to enter a Closed session for the purpose of discussing Economic Development NCGS 143-318.11(A) (4), and NCGS 143-318.11(A) (6). Commissioner Walker seconded all were in favor and entered a closed session at 8:03 pm on December 11th, 2023.

23 - Adjourn

Commissioner Marion made a motion to enter a regular meeting at 8:21 pm Commissioner Walker Seconded and all were in favor.

With no further business to discuss,

Commissioner Marion made a motion to adjourn the meeting Commissioner Walker seconded and all were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm December 11th, 2023.

Respectfully submitted by Pamela S Waters, City Clerk. Adopted this 8th day of January 2024.

Tangie Morgan
Tangie Morgan, Mayor

Pamela S. Waters
Pamela S Waters, City Clerk