



"Preserving Our Heritage, Shaping  
Our Future"

THE CITY OF  
*Flemington*  
GEORGIA

CITY HALL  
156 OLD SUNBURY ROAD  
FLEMINGTON, GA 31313

*Paul B. Hawkins*, MAYOR

CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
APRIL 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2020

**PRESENT AT CITY HALL:** Mayor Paul Hawkins  
Council Member Rene Harwell (entered at 5:40 p.m.)  
Jenelle Gordon, City Clerk  
SGT Grant Porter

**PRESENT VIA ZOOM:**  
(VIDEO CONFERENCING) Mayor Pro Tem Palmer Dasher  
Council Member Gail Evans  
Council Member Rene Harwell (until 5:35 p.m.)  
Council Member Donnie Smith  
Council Member David Edwards  
Council Member Leigh Smiley  
Craig Stafford, City Attorney

**ABSENT:** None

1. The regularly scheduled meeting of the City of Flemington was called to order by Mayor Paul Hawkins on Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 4:36 p.m. in the conference room at City Hall in Flemington, GA. A quorum necessary to conduct business was visibly present via Zoom video conferencing.
2. Invocation by Councilman Dasher, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance by Mayor Hawkins.
3. *Councilman Dasher motioned to dispense with the reading of the March minutes and accept them as written. Councilwoman Evans seconded the motion. All approved. The motion passed.*
4. SGT Grant Porter was in attendance to provide council with a list of statistics for the month of March.
5. The City Clerk, Jenelle Gordon, had several items to report to Council.
  - a. Council reviewed the City Expense Report for the month of March.
  - b. Mrs. Gordon reported that Ameris Bank offered the highest yield for the City's 12-month CD at 1.25% at the time of the CDs maturity, therefore it renewed for another year.
  - c. Council was briefed that the LaQuinta hotel (Navka) failed to remit their hotel/motel tax for the month of February 2020. Mr. Whitford at The Resource Group emailed and stated that Navka had failed to report all of their properties. Mr. Whitford will continue to track this issue.
  - d. Mrs. Gordon stated that Mr. Whitford remarked that having had 5 of 6 hotels to report and remit payment for February was above the average remittance across the state. He cautioned that going forward cities can expect to see a significant decrease in hotel/motel tax revenue, which may include no revenue, during the COVID-19 pandemic. He forecasted a half month remittance of the tax for March 2020 due to the national declaration of the pandemic at the middle of the month and rapidly dropping to almost no remittance until travel resumes after the pandemic. The Liberty County Convention & Visitors Bureau had been notified of the upcoming drastic decline in the amount of their disbursements.

- e. With the hotel/motel revenue unknown during COVID-19, Mrs. Gordon stated that she and the Mayor need to wait to present Council with a budget for FY21 until after GMA provides direction on how best for cities to proceed with budgeting for the next fiscal year. A GMA webinar planned for the end of April will focus on this topic.
- f. The final item presented to Council was a Q3FY20 financial review. The Clerk reported that the City was evenly balanced between revenue and expenditures.

## 6. New Business

- a. Mr. Mike Allen, accompanied by his attorney Mr. Jonathan Gaskin, came before Council via video conference to request their reconsideration of the request for septic tank installation on six (6) lots on Old Hines Rd. With the vote failing to receive a second at the March 2020 Council meeting, the initial request was deemed unresolved.

Mr. Allen cited undue financial burden as his main reason for his request for septic tank installation. He stated that a level 4 soil test had been done and the properties met the environmental requirement for septic tank installation. When asked about the costs by Council, Mr. Allen stated that the cost for septic tank installation was about the same as installing gravity sewer (not including the sewer impact fees paid to the City of Hinesville).

Also present via Zoom were Mr. Jeff Ricketson from the LCPC representing City Planning, and Mr. Paul Simonton serving as an Engineering advisor to Council. Mr. Simonton's opinion was that grinder pump stations were the least favorable option for the lots, with septic tanks or gravity sewer being better options. He advised that the optimal choice from both a maintenance and environmental standpoint was gravity flow sewer, which was also the collective preference of Council. After some discussion, *Councilwoman Smith made a motion to disapprove the septic tank request. Councilman Edwards seconded the motion. All approved (to include a note from Councilwoman Harwell that an Ordinance regarding septic tanks should be adopted). The motion passed.* Mayor Hawkins stated that either gravity flow or grinder pump stations could now be installed. *\*\*Councilwoman Smiley recused herself from all conversation and voting due to conflict of interest.\*\**

- b. Mayor Hawkins presented to Council a request from Georgia Power to transfer billing to the City for eleven (11) LED Street Lights on Old Hines Rd. *Councilwoman Evans made a motion to allow the Mayor to approve the billing transfer when the lights came online. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Smith. All approved. The motion passed.*

## 7. Unfinished Business

1. Mr. Stafford shared with Council that Mr. Kelly Davis would compose a letter to Flemington residents to notify them about the solid waste billing transfer to their property taxes and would forward it before the weeks end.
2. Council reviewed the Five Year Comprehensive Plan as updated by the City Clerk. Seeing no corrections to be made, it was the consensus that the Plan was given the green light for transmittal by the Liberty Consolidated Planning Commission ("LCPC") to the Department of Community Affairs ("DCA"), with a vote by Council for its adoption upon its acceptance at DCA.
3. The next item before Council was the adoption of the Resolution for the County Hazard Mitigation Plan. *Councilwoman Evans made a motion to approve the Resolution for the Hazard Mitigation Plan. Councilman Edwards seconded the motion. All approved. The motion passed.*
4. Unresolved Request for Six (6) Septic Tanks on Old Hines Rd. *\*\*Mayor Hawkins removed this item from the Agenda as it had been resolved earlier in the meeting during 6a.\*\**

*\*\* Experiencing technical difficulties arising at her location, Councilwoman Harwell left the video teleconference at 5:35 p.m. and attended the rest of the Council Meeting in person at City Hall. She arrived at 5:40 p.m. \*\**

## 8. Executive Session – Real Estate

1. *Councilman Edwards made a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of Real Estate. Councilwoman Smiley seconded the motion. All approved. The motion passed at 5:59 p.m.*
  2. *Councilwoman Evans made a motion to resume Open Session. Councilman Edwards seconded the motion. All approved. The motion passed at 6:24 p.m.*
  3. *Councilwoman Evans made a motion for a counter offer to be drafted for GDOT. Councilman Dasher seconded the motion. All approved. The motion passed.*
9. *Adjourn – Councilwoman Harwell made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Smiley. All approved. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.*