



**City of Fairburn  
Council Meeting Minutes  
January 23, 2023  
7:00 pm**

- I. The meeting was called to order by the Honorable Mayor Avery.
- II. Roll Call by City Clerk, Brenda B. James found the following members present:

The Honorable Mayor Pro-Tem Linda J. Davis  
The Honorable Alex Heath  
The Honorable Ulysses J. Smallwood

The Honorable Hattie Portis-Jones  
The Honorable Pat Pallend  
The Honorable James Whitmore

Also present was City Administrator Tony Phillips, Assistant City Administrator Jamila Criss, Assistant City Attorney Serena Nowell, Attorney Amber Qualls, and City Clerk Brenda James.

- III. The invocation was provided by Dr. Moses Woodruff, Fairburn United Methodist Church.
- IV. Pledge of Allegiance was in Unison.
- V. Presentations and Proclamations: N/A
- VI. Adoption of the City Council Agenda:

Mayor Avery asked to add item # 4 to the agenda to discuss adding \$7,000 to Councilwoman Portis-Jones travel as a Board Member on the National League of Cities to the budget. Mayor Pro Tem Davis made a motion to adopt the agenda as changed, with Councilman Smallwood providing the second. **The motion carried unanimously.**

- VII. Approval of the Minutes: Regular Council Meeting Minutes of January 9, 2023

Councilman Smallwood made a motion to approve the minutes as written, with Mayor Pro Tem Davis providing the second. **The motion carried unanimously.**

- VIII. Public Comments: N/A

- IX. **AGENDA ITEMS:**

1. **FY 2022 – 2023 Budget Amendment**

Finance Director, Bryan Stephens presented this item and stated the Ordinance would amend the FY 2022 – 2023 budget to support the positions of Building Operations Director, Administrative Assistant, and transfer of funding for Downtown Development



Authority from General Fund to Fund 860. The budget amendment will increase the general fund budget by \$132,678. Councilwoman Portis-Jones made a motion to approve the amended FY 2022 – 2023 budget for re-allocation of funds, with Councilman Pallend providing the second. **The motion carried unanimously.**

## **2. Purchase of Apparatus Bay Structure for Temporary Fire Station**

Dana Smith presented the item and stated this item is to approve the purchase of an apparatus bay structure for the temporary fire station. The modular building has been delivered but will need an apparatus bay to house the fire apparatus to go along with the unit.

Councilman Heath made a motion to approve the purchase of an apparatus bay structure for the temporary fire station on Bohannon Road in an amount not to exceed \$46,210.07. The second was provided by Mayor Pro Tem Davis.

Councilwoman Portis-Jones asked why this item was under Property Management and not under the Fire Department. Mr. Dana Smith stated the Fire Department fund was used to purchase the modular unit but the apparatus bay was purchased with the American Rescue Plan Act funds (ARPA). Property Management worked with Finance to find the building and the contractor, so we presented the item but have been in coordination with Chief Robinson to include all details. Councilwoman Portis-Jones said she assumed for accounting purposes and asset management, this item would come under the Fire Department and asked for clarification.

Assistant City Administrator, Jamila Criss stated the purchase of the bay for the Fire Department was not budgeted in our FY23 budget under the Fire Department. Council has allowed us to put together a plan for ARPA funding. This was the best source of funding we had without having to do a budget amendment for the purchase of the bay.

Mr. Tony Phillips stated we have gone through an extensive recruitment and interview process and have extended an offer to Mr. Dana Smith to join the Fairburn team. Mr. Smith has accepted the offer and will become an employee Wednesday of this week. Council welcomed him on board. Councilman Whitmore asked what would happen to this structure once the firehouse is built, would it be repurposed or sell it to someone else. Mr. Smith said that Chief Robinson plans on utilizing the bay on site for training purposes and to meet the needs of the city.

Mr. Phillips said the consultation with Chief Robinson and working with ISO and population expansion in the city, Chief Robinson anticipates the need for Fire Station #24, so, our needs go beyond Fire Station # 23 and this facility will continue to be an asset. After discussion, **the motion carried unanimously.**

## **3. Installation of Apparatus Bay Structure for Temporary Fire Station**

Dana Smith presented this item and stated this is for the installation of an apparatus bay



structure for the temporary fire station on Bohannon Road. We broke these two items up because it was more cost effective to seek two different vendors because other quotes combining these two items were three times more.

Councilmember Whitmore made a motion to approve the installation of an apparatus bay structure for the temporary fire station on Bohannon Road in an amount not to exceed \$39,864.00. Mayor Pro Tem Davis provided the second. **The motion carried unanimously.**

**4. Request to Add \$7,000 to Councilmember Hattie Portis-Jones Travel Budget to Fund Travel Needs as a National League of Cities Board Member for 2023**

Councilman Smallwood made a motion to add \$7,000 to Councilmember Hattie Portis-Jones' travel budget for being a Board Member on the National League of Cities, with Mayor Pro Tem Davis providing the second. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Mayor Avery introduced Fairburn's District Fulton County Commissioner Marvin Arrington Jr. Commissioner Arrington said he was the Fulton County Commissioner for District 5. The district maps were redrawn in part of the census effort. He said they just passed their budget of \$1.3 billion for FY23. A couple of events are coming up, our annual Black History Film Festival will be occurring at various libraries throughout the county. In March, there will be a few Town Hall Homestead Exemption meetings to make sure everyone is up on there exemptions.

Mayor Avery discussed the letter that was received from Fulton County regarding the election fee schedule and advised Commissioner Arrington that he would be receiving a letter addressing concerns related to those costs. Commissioner Arrington stated the letter the city received came from a staff member and had not been approved by the Board of Registration & Elections or by the Board of Commissioners. They have not had an opportunity to discuss it and felt it was a staff proposal. Commissioner Arrington had objections to the letter Fairburn received. Mayor Avery asked when the Board of Commissioners would discuss this item. Commissioner Arrington said he was unsure when this item would be up for discussion, but would follow up and advise Mayor and Council on the date.

**X. City Administrator's Report**

Mr. Tony Phillips presented a summary of the City's monthly administrative activities for December 2022. He acknowledged city staff for their dedication, professionalism, and the outstanding job performed every day. He discussed December 2022 highlights:

- Christmas Tree Lightening Event
- Christmas Gala (Staff & Stakeholders Recognition)
- New Business: Lady Fannie Mae's Ultimate Seafood
- Angel Tree Program in conjunction with Fairburn Housing Authority



- Shop with a Cop Annual Event
- Wellness Team sponsored Financial Wellness Lunch & Learn “Mastering Your Money” in partnership with Ameris Bank
- December Holiday Break Camp
- Golden Holiday Brunch
- Transition of Code Enforcement to the Planning and Zoning Department
- Old Campbell Courthouse post fire Asbestos abatement and debris removal completed
- Temporary Fire Station Building delivered; work to establish utilities and provide furnishings in progress

Councilwoman Portis-Jones said she understood why Code Enforcement was moved back to Planning and Zoning and is hopeful this is the last time this department is shifted. She’s glad they are back where they belong and said we need to support them and make them feel at home.

Jamila Criss stated Code Enforcement is in good hands, Ms. Brookins is amazing in what she has done from the start of the transition to today. She has gone on ride along with each Code Enforcement Officer and has added a fourth member to our team and just concluded interviews for a Code Enforcement Manager.

Planning and Zoning Director, Denise Brookins said she is thrilled to be working with our Code Enforcement Officers, they are truly a gifted group of individuals who are passionate about City of Fairburn. We do weekly meetings and talk about the challenges they face and how we can create some quick efficient solutions to help with their field work and being transparent with the general public. We are looking at some technology investments so that everybody can understand what we are doing and what code enforcement covers. We still work very closely with the Police Department to make sure they are safe but also be used for neighborhood stabilization and vitalization. That comes with having conversation with the Police Department with Planning and Zoning and Economic Development so we will all be on the same team and feels Planning and Zoning is a natural merger of all those fields.

Councilwoman Portis-Jones said it is extremely important that Code Enforcement Officers are constantly trained and educated about what they can and can’t do and how to communicate with the public. We need to make sure they get the resources and tools they need to do their job.

Mr. Phillips said we will take Councilwoman Portis-Jones suggestions under advisement. This was a significantly delivered process, Code Enforcement is in its home and do not see it going anywhere in the foreseeable future. He has full confidence in Ms. Brookins that she will elevate the department and create value in our employees. That is the core principle in our management style, we want every employee to feel valuable.



Ms. Criss stated they have training scheduled in February and through the Enterprise agreement that Mayor and Council approved, they have new vehicles in the upcoming weeks.

Mr. Phillips stated now that we have onboarded our new Finance Director, Mr. Bryan Stephens, we will resume with your monthly financial reports in the second meeting of the month.

**XI. Council Comments:**

Councilman Whitmore said he had the opportunity to witness the second annual candle lighting at Cooks Funeral Home. Cooks has been with us for two years and he does this to the families he has serviced to help them remember their loved ones they lost. Looking at the number of people he has serviced, he has done a great job for our community and wanted to publicly thank him for what he does. He also stated that based on the comments in our work session regarding space to have Elections, this would be a great reason to have a community center in Duncan Park . It would be large enough to have parking facilities and everything else.

Councilwoman Portis-Jones thanked Mayor and Council for supporting her with the financial support as she serves on the Board for National League of Cities. The League is important to municipalities our size and even smaller, they were able to help cities receive the ARPA dollars and all the subsequent fundings from the Federal Government. She congratulated the City of Fairburn for the success of 2022 and Mayor Avery for his great decisions to bring on Mr. Phillips and the rest of the staff. She appreciates the renewed hope, excitement, and joy for everyone working for the city.

Councilman Heath said we couldn't do our jobs without the employees and thanked them for their long hours and enduring pain through the water supply problem.

Councilman Pallend said we are continuing to head in the right direction as a result of those excellent people who are taking care of us and doing their jobs as well as they might and when we conclude this year, it will be very noticeable. Folks not only in the city but folks all around the area come to that same conclusion that this is a very interesting place to be.

Councilman Smallwood echoed everyone else's sentiments. He thanked Mr. Phillips, Mayor, Ms. Criss, and staff. We are really situated to succeed, we did a lot in 2022. He thanked Councilwoman Portis-Jones for serving and representing Fairburn, he knows she's a bulldog, she is the voice for the voiceless and will represent us well. A lot has happened in 2022, the new businesses and we are really growing. He wanted to publicly thank one business, Rooster King for their service. They closed their doors and he is sad about it. People came from across the metro for the cook to order fried chicken and they were awesome.



Mayor Pro Tem Davis echoed what her colleagues have said about our staff, Mayor and leadership. It is evident, our citizens see it and feel it. She attended the Cities United Summit this weekend with Georgia Municipal Association, one of the classes she took was in reference to emergency crisis and was titled, Steering Through the Storm. She has already requested a meeting with the City Administration so she can share some of the good things, the best practices on dealing with a crisis, the recovery, and how to sustain what we learned and go back and look at what we can improve. She is excited about the Teen Music Studio that was revealed in the Parks and Recreation Department, it is awesome. It is going to teach our youth the business part of the music. Ms. Ragland is coming on board, she is excited about getting our youth leadership together and the mayor agrees with that.

Mayor Avery stated his intent to do a State of City Address on the second meeting in February where we will talk about the successes and challenges that we've had. We were blessed to have the year we had in 2022 and have brought on some key personnel with the level of expertise needed in these specific professions from Planning and Zoning Director, Finance Director, and Facilities Director. We still have some challenges that we must address in the next two years. He thanked members of council as he took a class over the weekend about Future Planning Development from staffing, finances, to Economic Development and how important it was for your members of council being heard. He is excited about the 11- and 12-year-old youth being taught the business of broadcasting. He acknowledged Mr. Berry in Parks and Recreation for dealing with the seniors and putting on a lot of activities for them. He sent one of our employees, Mr. Tom Banks his condolences and prayers for losing his wife. He welcomed back the City Attorney, Mr. Rory Starkey who just lost his father.

**XII. Adjournment:**

Mayor Pro Tem Davis made a motion to adjourn the meeting with Councilman Heath providing the second. The meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm. **The motion carried unanimously.**

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Brenda B. James, City Clerk



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Mario Avery, Mayor