

**June 17, 2020  
Regular Session  
City of Gaston  
Zoom Videoconference**

**Present:** Mayor David **Meeker**, Council President Bill **Martin**, Mario **DePiero**, Andrew **Sewall**, Sarah **Branch**, Suzy **Whittaker**, and Don **Richter**. Present: Lt. Bob **Ray**, Dale Smith, Julie Dailey and others represented on the sign in sheet (attached)

**Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** City Recorder Wenonah **Blanchette** and Washington County Sheriff's Office Deputy Jarod **McCreary**.

- I. Mayor David **Meeker** called the regular meeting to order at 6:44 PM.
- II. **ROLL CALL:** City Recorder **Blanchette** conducted the roll call for the record with:  
Councilor Mario **DePiero**: present  
Councilor Andrew **Sewall**: present  
Councilor Bill **Martin**: present  
Mayor David **Meeker**: present  
Councilor Sarah **Branch**: present  
Councilor Suzy **Whittaker**: present  
Councilor Don **Richter**: present
- III. **ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS:**
- IV. **CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS:**  
**Waste Management-Annual Cleanup Event:** Dean **Kampfer** from Waste Management was present to discuss with Council Waste Management's continued operations during the pandemic; how local drivers are following CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) guidelines maintaining collection services for customers, and present tonight to discuss scheduling Gaston's spring cleanup date for July 21<sup>st</sup>. Instead of using Brown Park for the bulky waste products, Waste Management is offering Gaston residents the month of July for bulky waste collection at the transfer station. Gaston customers can bring up to 3 bulky waste items free. Kirk **Duncan** who also represents Waste Management answered questions from Council about possibly adding yard debris to regular collection service for Gaston residents and yard debris collection cost options. Also discussed is the franchise between the City and Waste Management that is expiring 2021. A consensus was met with Council to hold the spring cleanup date as July 21<sup>st</sup> and discuss at the next Council meeting options for renewing the franchise agreement.  
  
**Washington County Contract Police Services 2020-2021:** Lt. Bob **Ray** was present to answer questions Council may have with contract police services, but due to his microphone was not working he was unable to speak. Currently the City pays a deputy for 30 hours a week with previous discussions had for reducing police services with Mayor **Meeker** calling for a vote to accept the police services contract. Councilor **Martin** motioned to approve the police services contract; second heard by Councilor **Richter**. No further discussions or changes on police services was heard and will maintain an unchanged level of services for 2020-2021 fiscal year. Motion passed with aye votes heard from: **DePiero**, **Sewall**, **Martin**, **Meeker**, **Branch**, **Whittaker**, and **Richter**. Nay: 0.
- V. **STAFF/COUNCIL/COMMITTEE/SUPERVISOR REPORTS:**  
**Police:** Deputy **McCreary** provided his verbal report and stats for the month of May:
  - This month's major activity occurred on Salter Street beginning with a search warrant and resulting with the arrest of two subjects for stolen vehicle and theft. They have not been seen in town or near the property since May 28<sup>th</sup>.

- Mail thefts have been occurring in town and more are occurring outside City limits in rural areas possibly looking for stimulus payment checks.
- On June 16, a call was made to police of mail theft with the suspect driving a motorcycle in Laurelwood. Near the same time, the deputy drove on Cottonwood Street to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and upon driving over the ridge, a man matching the description of the suspect noticed the deputy and using his screwdriver started the motorcycle and sped away resulting in a chase which was later terminated for safety reasons. This is still an ongoing investigation.
- Calls for service is up for May with a couple of domestic disturbances from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street cul-de-sac of residents getting drunk and arguing.
- A report was filed of someone stealing water jugs from their front porch.
- An individual came into City Hall reporting he was assaulted last year during the car show and wanted to file a report. Upon further investigation, it was determined it was not an assault. This is still on ongoing case.
- Deputy **McCreary** asked if anyone had any further questions with Gaston Resident Brent **Whittaker** asking if the City could notify the property owners at 104 2<sup>nd</sup> Street of their overgrown weeds, particularly black berry briars. Deputy **McCreary** said he will work on sending the property owners a letter asking them to clean up the backside of the property that is on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. Councilor **Branch** wanted to inform Deputy **McCreary** of a conversation the School Superintendent had with the Budget Committee in praising his work with the School and involvement being an active member of the School.

**Recorders Report:** Recorder **Blanchette** provided her report with the following:

- Legal: Staff consulted with the attorney with final revisions of forms and letters required by Community Development Block Grant. Also working with the attorney with updating final drafts for the temporary construction easements necessary for the Cottonwood Sidewalk project. Updating the zone codes for a more streamlined process for future development.
- Planning: Not much land use activity is happening due to COVID-19. There have been a few questions about a couple properties on South Road which are located inside the UGB (Urban Growth Boundary) that can be annexed into the City limits. This is a lengthy process but doable.
- Municipal Court: Rescheduled municipal court to July 21<sup>st</sup> originally scheduled May 19<sup>th</sup>. This is due to COVID-19 and the Stay at Home orders from the State Governor. The deputy has started writing tickets again but only in certain circumstances. There is a total of 16 possible attendees to court but may change with future payments.
- Water Loss: The Recorder explained that figures presented reflect a significant drop in water loss possibly due to a construction company pulling water from a hydrant without City authorization. A nearby neighbor by the hydrant observed a construction water truck pulling water from it and reported it to City Hall. The Recorder attempted contact with the construction outfit but no has not heard back.
- Recall Election: A recall election for Councilor **Branch** and Councilor **Whittaker** will take place July 14 with ballots being sent to registered voters within the City limits of Gaston June 24<sup>th</sup>. A recall election can occur for any councilor for any reason only needing 15% of the total number of registered voters signing a recall petition that is then submitted to the County for signature verification. Once that occurs the councilors up for recall can either resign or participate in the recall election by submitting a letter of justification.
- City Council Elections: There will be three seats coming open for the upcoming election. Seats 1, 2, and 3 will be declared vacant and up for reelection. Forms will be ready July 27<sup>th</sup> with an end filing date of September 3<sup>rd</sup>. These seats require filing petition sheets with no less than 10 signatures for each qualifying candidate.
- CCR 2019: The consumer confidence reports for 2019 water quality was mailed to all water residents on June 10<sup>th</sup> being prepared by Matt **Olson** from Hiland Water.
- Business License Renewals: Annual license fees for 2020 are due by July 1<sup>st</sup> with 32 registered businesses in town for 2019.

- 100 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Storm Drain: Clean Water Services was contacted and conducted an inspection of the storm line Tuesday determining the 10-foot line is small for the level of water diverted through noting a dent in the line found near the exit. Gravel was also found near the end of the storm drain line and in the grates. The individual performing the inspection provided his opinion saying the City should install a larger pipe for the storm system. An email was sent to the field supervisor asking for a cost estimate to replace the pipe and who if Clean Water Services could perform the work. Still waiting for his response.
- 124 Front Street Green Awning: A letter was sent to the property owners and have not heard back.
- 205 2<sup>nd</sup> Street: A new complaint was received from 103 Park Street regarding chickens on the property with the placement of their chicken coop in violation of the livestock ordinance. This is to be discussed later on the agenda.
- Insurance Renewals: Insurance renewals have been processed resulting with at 5.3% reduction in premiums due to the selling of the City's two decommissioned police cars and removed from the city's auto insurance.
- Brown Park Opening: Several calls have been heard for using the park but with the Governor's closing parks throughout the state; brown park remains closed until Phase 2 of the Washington County's plan to reopen.
- Library Insurance Claim: Three proposals have been received and have selected the lowest bid with Mark Dawson Construction being awarded the job to repair the library. Items being repaired include new carpets, new linoleum, and repair of approximately 2' of sheetrock that was damaged due to the water intrusion event that occurred in the end of January. Cost of the repair is \$24,776
- Spoke with John **Southgate** regarding the use of the 3-bay garage to possibly lease to a potential client encouraging economic growth for Gaston. He stated there is a potential client but nothing official.
- Grants:
  - Safe Routes to School: The city has three out of the four temporary construction easements. Once the city receives the final easement, the project will be going out to bid. Also working with Washington County to collect the remaining grant funds from the MSTIP Opportunity Funds. The grant award from Washington County is \$40,000.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Widening: The City issued the letters of interest for the property owners that will be affected by either the temporary construction easements or/and the property acquisition. The next step is to get an appraisal done on the properties and is looking like this will occur late June early July.
- Ziplly Fiber has taken over Frontier Communications and staff will be working on drafting the City's telecommunication franchise agreement that has not been updated since 1993. Due to COVID-19 this has been delayed. Unsure of when this update will occur, but the existing franchise continues to be utilized in the same manner.
- The City will be working with Waste Management to possibly update the franchise agreement that was terminated in 2017 and expires in 2021.
- Upcoming Dates: September 26-27 At Brown Park there will be a waterfowl festival with vendors, waterfowl calling contest, kid's events, boat bling contest, and a BBQ fundraiser. On August 16, at Brown Park the annual Wapato church's summer sizzle is scheduled. Both of these events are dependent on if Washington County lessens the mass gathering restrictions put in place due to COVID-19.
- Audit interim field work for the 2019-2020 fiscal year is scheduled for July 21 and 22. This is the first of two occasions that the auditors come to City Hall and review financial documents.

Councilor **Martin** asked if any of the projects have been stalled with the Recorder stating the only stall on any projects is due to COVID-19. Councilor **Branch** asked if the Engineer for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street widening project can provide for the residents a picture map of the area that will be widened and when will the City know of the results of the appraisal. The Council was informed that the property owners will be well informed of the appraisal results as well as the notifications. It was further explained that due to the notification and appraisal process the project is taking longer to put out to

bid than expected. Councilor **Sewall** asked to be informed of the process and construction details of both projects. Councilor **Whittaker** requested the Recorder when going to look into options for waste collection services to make sure to include yard debris as an option for customers.

**VI. PRESENTATIONS:** No presentations at this time.

**VII. CONSENT AGENDA:** Recorder **Blanchette** explained she was unable to complete minutes with the Bills Payable as the only item for consideration for the consent agenda. Question heard regarding invoices from HR Answers, Stratus Corporation, and Telelanguage Inc following a motion to approve the bills payable \$45,321.26 made by Councilor **Whittaker** and seconded by Councilor **DePiero**. Motion passed with aye votes heard from: **DePiero, Sewall, Martin, Meeker, Branch, Whittaker,** and **Richter**. Nay: 0.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS:**

**Development Code Update:** Councilor **Branch** stated she read through the City Attorney's recommendation for updating and incorporating all five suggestions as recommended with a consensus heard from the Council to incorporate all five suggestions into the development code. Further clarification was made that the Recorder will be working with the Attorney incorporating these into the code documents and agreed that no work session was necessary to make this happen.

**Resolution 20-005, A Resolution Imposing and Categorizing Taxes:**

**Resolution 20-006, A Resolution Declaring the City's Election to Receive State Revenues:**

**Resolution 20-007, A Resolution Adopting the Budget and Making Appropriations:**

**Amending CDBG Intergovernmental Agreement No. 1 Contract:**

Minor corrections were noted on dates and figures for corrections with the budget following a motion to adopt Resolution 20-005, Resolution 20-006, Resolution 20-007, and the CDBG Intergovernmental Agreement No. 1 Contract with all noted corrections from earlier discussions was made by Councilor **Sewall** and seconded by Councilor **DePiero**. Motion passed. Voting Aye: **DePiero, Sewall, Martin, Meeker, Branch, Whittaker,** and **Richter**. Nay: None.

**Public Works Specialist Job Description:** Councilor **Sewall** explained that the hiring committee worked together revising this job description with Councilor **Martin** commenting the job description had too much responsibilities for one person and should only answer to the Mayor or Supervisor not the entire council. City Resident **Brent Whittaker** explained when he was employed in this position the ultimate responsibility of employment fell on the City Council, but Council specified a provision to select a City Supervisor. The individual who is hired will have a direct supervisor but ultimately the Council is responsible for employment. Councilor **Branch** asked if a level one distribution certification is required would the Council consider hiring someone who does not have it but able to obtain it with discussion heard to require certification on applications but may consider it on an individual basis. Further discussion was heard on locations to post the Public Works Specialist job listing with Council deciding to post the job on Governmentjobs.com, CIS, Indeed, Zip Recruiter, OAWU, LOC, and the newspaper. Councilor **Branch** requested the Recorder revise the previously adopted code update to include the new job title as Public Works Specialist and remove Public Works Director.

**IX. OLD BUSINESS:**

**Hiring Committee:** No action or discussion needed.

**X. COMPLAINTS:**

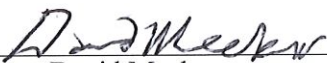
**New—205 2<sup>nd</sup> Street-Chicken Coop Location:** Recorder **Blanchette** explained a letter was provided to the City as a response to the complaint and read it out loud. The complaint of 205 2<sup>nd</sup> Street claimed the chicken coop was abutting a fence and in the front yard. Ordinance 2012-01 explains any chick coop is to be 10 feet from any property line and located in the back yard. Councilor **Branch** explained the Council should show


consistency with enforcing ordinances as similar issues of chickens throughout town have been reported. The City Recorder was instructed to send the property owner a letter confirming the City reviewed their response to the complaint and inform them the City will uphold the ordinance and request they move the chicken coop in the back yard and 10 feet from all property lines.

**Old—**

- 124 Front Street-Green Awning: Letter was prepared and reviewed by the City Attorney and mailed to the property owner regarding the safety of the awning on June 5<sup>th</sup>. City resident Brent **Whittaker** explained there will be problems in court if the City declared it an enumerated nuisance because the City does not have a solid building code. With this complaint being solely based on the enumerated nuisance it doesn't have much merit. Council requested the Recorder to send a second letter stating from discussions had amongst the Council the City has determined not to proceed with declaring it a nuisance but state that if there is any injury resulting from the safety issue of the green awning; the property owner will be held solely responsible.
- 100 3<sup>rd</sup> Street: Recorder **Blanchette** stated the storm drain was inspected and stated there is lots of gravel in the grate and in the line itself. Councilor **DePiero** asked if the City has checked with the insurance company stating if the infrastructure installed is over 10 years old you cannot file a claim against it. Brent **Whittaker**, the property owner who filed the complaint was present and stated the issue is not the water backing up it is the fact water is going around the drainage system as well as there is a lack of a gutter. The deluge of water flowing down 3<sup>rd</sup> street and going between the asphalt and the curb into the driveway is what is causing damage. The Recorder was instructed to obtain a scope of work prepared by the engineer for a cost estimate in repairing the drain system preventing further damage to his property.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn was made by Councilor **DePiero** with second heard by Councilor **Richter**. Motion carried unanimously closing the meeting at 8:39PM.

  
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Mayor David Meeker

Attest:   
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City Recorder Wenonah Blanchette