

**October 21, 2020
Regular Session
City of Gaston
Zoom Videoconference**

Present: Mayor David **Meeker**, Council President Bill **Martin**, Mario **DePiero**, Andrew **Sewall**, Margaret **Bell**, and Don **Richter**.

Absent: Tony **Hall**

Staff Present: City Recorder Wenonah **Blanchette**, Public Works Specialist Rick **Mapes**, and Washington County Sheriff's Office Deputy Jarod **McCreary**.

- I. Mayor David **Meeker** called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 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 Margaret **Bell**: present
Councilor Tony **Hall**: absent with excuse
Councilor Don **Richter**: present
 - III. **ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS:** Mayor **Meeker** called for additions or deletions to the agenda with none heard.
 - IV. **CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS:**
Mayor **Meeker** called for citizen communication with none heard.
 - V. **STAFF/COUNCIL/COMMITTEE/SUPERVISOR REPORTS:**
Police: Deputy **McCreary** provided a verbal report for September to the Council:
 - Domestic disturbances have tripled from the City's average number of domestic calls and reports for incidents have increased because of COVID-19. Three arrests and one recovered stolen vehicle were reported in the month of September.
 - Municipal Court is scheduled for November and will be conducting court via Zoom.
 - Deputy **McCreary** reported on Salter Street there were three domestic calls made within two days and expressed concern of an increase in theft surrounding Gaston Heights once construction begins.
 - Sergeant **Ray** provided input on behalf of the Sheriff's office citing that due to COVID restrictions; ticket writing is difficult to do at this time.
 - Deputy **McCreary** reported the speed trailer was used on Hwy 47 for and then moved to Church Street to monitor speeding cars and help determine what speed enforcement mechanism should be used to slow speeders. Stats from the speed trailer are available from the Recorder.
 - Continued efforts have been made to establish a contact representative with the railroad property in hopes of clearing briars and blackberry bushes to enhance vision of the wildlife refuge parking area. Discussion heard of who would have direct contact or authorization to clear the property from blackberries. No action taken.
- Recorders Report:** Recorder **Blanchette** provided her report with the following:
- Legal:
 - The City Charter has been prepared and will be on the ballot for the upcoming General Election to adopt an updated charter. The updated charter as well as the current city charter are on the website for anyone to review.
 - Letter for 104 2nd Street is being drafted by the City Attorney however the outlined process recently decided by Council at the last meeting will need to be compared to the City's currently adopted process in the nuisance ordinance.

- Clean Water Services is working with the City to finalize the purchase of property that was to occur in the 1970s but was never recorded with Washington County. When the City sold USA (United Sewerage Agency) it's sewer rights, the pump station was to be included in that sale but will now need to work with the attorney in preparing a quick claim deed to transfer ownership of the property.
 - Offer letters are being drafted by the Attorney for purchases of the right-of-way on 3rd Street as part of the 3rd Street widening project.
- Financials: September financials report the General Fund is still in the hole but looking better each month as the General Fund makes money. Financial Statements for September has been mailed to all Councilors but available in print for anyone wanting a hard copy.
- Planning:
 - 317 Salter Street Partition has completed the 14-day comment period with no comments received and will be mailing the property owner the approval letter tomorrow.
 - Question received with wanting to know the height limit for installing and flying a flag on a residential lot with the answer being that as long as the flag pole does not exceed the height restriction for that zone, it is allowed.
- Municipal Court: Traffic court has been rescheduled to a virtual court November 17th and will be the first-time offering court via zoom.
- A 2nd water intrusion event occurred in the library where a drain on the roof was plugged preventing water from draining causing water to backup along the south wall until it breached the inner wall. ServPRO was contacted again to mitigate the leak and address damages. The damages were turned over to the insurance company and a claim started for repairs but repairing the roof is not covered under the insurance policy. The City is now seeking contractors to fix the roof but due to the busy season, it has become difficult to repair the roof soon than expected.
- 500 Front Street: was removed from the complaints list as in recent observations there are no longer any tires on the property.
- 304 Church Street: Reported the violation has been cleared and there is no longer any vegetation encroaching adjacent properties.
- 100 3rd Street: Storm drainage work was performed Monday and Tuesday. Waiting to hear comments back from the surrounding property owners if there are continued issues with water drainage.
- Met with John **Southgate** regarding a prospective client looking at the City Hall building for lease options to encourage economic development for Gaston. This is still in the preliminary discussing stage and no official word on the building has been determined.
- Updated all accounts/vendors and charge accounts with the new Public Works Specialist Rick **Mapes** contact.
- New computers will need to be purchased for both the Public Works and Recorder.
 - Safe Routes to School Cottonwood Street: Still working at obtaining the temporary construction easement for 100 Cottonwood Street and cannot award the project to Lee Contractors until this document is signed. In consulting with the attorney, it was emphasized that we need to have it signed. 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.
 - 3rd Street Widening: The attorney is drafting offer letters to purchase right-of-way along 3rd Street to move forward with the project. Once the property has been purchased the City may proceed with putting the project out to bid and eventually proceed construction in March 2021.
- 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.

Councilor **Sewall** wanted to know if the City is at risk for losing the Safe Routes to School Grant and the grant monies from Washington County Opportunity Funding in the event the project cannot proceed with construction due to the temporary construction easement not being signed. The Recorder explained to Council the City's continued attempt obtaining signatures which during negotiations of the project with this property, the owner specifically requested changes to the easement documents. Staff then continued to mail, arrive at the property, and call the property owner but has not made contact with him to sign it. It is possible to lose this grant but in working with ODOT and Washington County certain measures go into every grant to make it successful. The City has not lost this grant and will continue the project until legal action is necessary.

Public Works: Public Works Specialist Rick **Mapes** provided his verbal report to the Council for September with the following:

- **Water:** Meters for the AMR upgrades were purchased and on their way with installation beginning once they arrive. Working on obtaining bids for leak repairs on E. Main Street as well as replacing several hydrants. Water loss is less this month than last month.
- **Roof Repair:** Obtaining bids for the roof repair is taking longer than expected regarding the second insurance claim filed for water damages in the library because it is the busy season for roofing contractors. One contractor was able to quickly assess the roof damage recommending repairs to the south side roof, overtop the office area and install weather flashing on the entire roof side of the building.
- **Update Telemetry:** Public Works Specialist **Mapes** is looking to update the water system telemetry system to a full SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system that could monitor trends seen in the water system that include using pumps remotely, determine how long pumps run, measure water pressure within the system, and many other reporting features. For the City to have this system installed would cost approximately \$9,400 with a \$1,200 a year annual service fee.
- **City Hall-Public Works Specialist Mapes** expressed concern with the current office layout in the event of a crisis situation and looking to rearrange office equipment. A maintenance item that needs addressing is the toilet in the library.
- **Onion Lane:** Surveying Onion lane to be completed next week to determine property lines between the City, Federal Fish & Wildlife and Scott **Flaugherty**. Restroom and fencing should be installed next week by the Federal Fish & Wildlife as part of the wildlife refuge. Proposals for reinforcing and securing the building on Onion Lane are coming in over \$100,000.00. The proposal does not include concrete expenses with some items to be taken care of in-house to reduce costs.
- **100 3rd Street:** Concrete was poured on Tuesday for mitigating storm water but will need to wait for rain to ensure the water flows correctly before making further assessments.
- **Streets:** There are equipment and tools needed for installing new street signs throughout town. Cost comparisons have been made for speed bumps vs. speed bumps, but more information is needed. Maintenance on the storm system to include camera inspections to be scheduled sometime after winter. Street sweeping was discussed with increasing the number times sweeping is done each year to help the storm system.
- **Tools and Equipment:** The Public Works Director expressed his difficulty with recent maintenance due to the need to haul equipment around and wanted permission to purchase a dump trailer; big enough to haul the tractor. Also discussed was moving the tommy gate lift from the red truck to the white work truck with no Councilor opposed to this request. Requested to purchase a small portable generator and work truck bed organizer lead to a further discussion on needed equipment, purchase of a new work vehicle/sell old work vehicles, telemetry upgrades and possibly raising the employee spending limit higher than \$1,500 on city credit cards. No action taken at this time
- Councilor **Martin** inquired about water issues by Hedin Terrace resulting in several higher than normal water bills with Public Works Director **Mapes** responding that two of the three homes with water issues have explainable high-water bills; the other home used over 109,000 gallons further explaining this usage is not likely. The meters for all three homes have been replaced and leak detection will be scheduled to find water leaks in the area as these lines maybe copper and will need to be replaced. Councilor **Bell** cited total cost of equipment needed totals \$11,000 with the Recorder

responding the City has money for these improvements and come out of the Water Fund Reserve, Water Fund and Street Fund. Councilor **Sewall** and Public Works Director **Mapes** discussed how a new SCADA system would work requesting to review similar proposals for like services. No action taken.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA: Mayor **Meeker** called for a motion to adopt the consent agenda which includes bills payable for October, February 11, 2020 Special Session, February 19, 2020 Work Session, September 16, 2020 Regular Session with a motion made to approve the consent agenda made by Councilor **Bell** and seconded by Councilor **Martin**. Motion carried with aye votes heard from **Sewall, DePiero, Martin, Meeker, Bell, and Richter**. Nay: None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS:
Public Works: Discussion heard on the Public Works Director's request for equipment with a motion to approve the suitcase style Honda generator and a hammer drill, made by Councilor **DePiero** and seconded by Councilor **Richter**. Voting Aye: **DePiero, Sewall, Richter, Martin, Meeker, and Bell**. Nay: 0.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS:
Waste Management Franchise: Dean **Kampfer** was present to provide Council with an update on the Waste Management franchise and apologized for not having ready a draft franchise agreement to review at this time. Councilor **DePiero** stated he would like to review the franchise before scheduling a work session to discuss it with Dean **Kampfer** informing Council a draft franchise agreement will be ready by next Council meeting for them to review. No action taken.

X. COMPLAINTS:

New—

Stormwater from School: Councilor **Martin** stated he personally saw the stormwater runoff directly run through their yard at 309 Park Street. Public Works Director **Mapes** stated he has been in contact with the School who are aware of the runoff issue and are taking care of it.


Railroad Easement Briars: Public Works Director **Mapes** explained that contact from the railroad is still being established.

Old—

100 3rd Street: By consensus the Council agreed to remove this complaint from the complaints list

104 2nd Street: Councilor **DePiero** recommended keeping this complaint on the complaint list until there is a resolution and advice back from the attorney. Councilor **Richter** stated the chicken coop is gone but that doesn't remove the smell immediately. The Recorder stated if the fence is removed the property is no longer in violation of City code unless the property has more than six chickens. A consensus of the Council was made to remove this complaint from the complaints list if the fence is gone. Councilor **Bell** suggested using lye to remove the smell.

XI. ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn was made by Councilor **Richter** with second heard by Councilor **Martin**. Motion carried unanimously closing the meeting at 8:15PM.



Mayor David Meeker

Attest: 

City Recorder Wenonah Blanchette