

December 18, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Edwards with prayer and salute to the flag. In attendance: Edwards, Rudd, McClendon, and McKenzie.

A motion to approve the November 13, 2023, minutes was made by Rudd, second by McKenzie, 4/0.

Katrina Kern addressed the Council concerning the proposed 300' communications tower located next to her home on Sheldon Street. Ms. Kern is totally against the tower being in the city at all, especially next to her property. She stated it will decrease her property value 2-20%.

David Kern also spoke against the proposed tower site stating it will ruin the natural aesthetics of the area and decline property values. Mr. Kern requested the Council consider alternative sites and postpone the vote until the January meeting.

Vice Mayor Rudd spoke to the Wakulla County Property Appraiser's Office and was told property located adjacent to other communication towers located within the County has not decreased in value.

Councilman McClendon asked about possible dead zones in the proposed area and would still like to look at other locations.

At this time, the Council held the **2<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing and Adoption for Ordinance 2023-06** - An Ordinance of The City of Sopchoppy, Florida, Amending The City Of Sopchoppy Zoning Map And Approving The Construction Of An Approximately 300 Foot Tall Communication Tower; Providing For Severability; Repealing All Ordinances In Conflict; And Providing An Effective Date. A **motion** to approve the Ordinance as read was made by Mayor Edwards. Discussion followed.

Joe Humphries, Wakulla County Communications Contract Manager, addressed the dead zone issue raised by Councilman McClendon. Mr. Humphries stated the six tower sites will cover the County 99.99% and Sopchoppy will bridge Smith Creek to the rest of the County. The County will be installing fiber optics to cover storm periods to reduce outages during the storms.

Councilman McClendon asked if there is anywhere else the tower can be located. The County needs and deserves the system but he would not want it located outside his home either, and the proposed site is also located close to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks area.

With a motion to approve Ordinance 2023-06 by Mayor Edwards on the table, a **second** was made by Vice Mayor Rudd, approved 3/1 with McClendon opposing.

City Clerk Ashley Schilling presented engineering procurement documents for the upcoming CDBG Stormwater Grant (Orange Avenue to Municipal Avenue). A **motion** was made by Mayor Edwards to approve and authorize the mayor to sign the BDI CDBG engineering contract, subject to approval of the contract by the Florida Department of Commerce, second by Rudd, 4/0.

Ric Delp, BDI, presented an update to the Water System Master Plan. BDI considered the anticipated connections and max day flows over the next 20 years as well as storage capacity now and with improvements and broke the recommended improvements into four phases. The estimated cost over the 20-year period is \$40 million.

- Phase 1 – begin with well 7, \$1.5 million grant, pipeline improvements
- Phase 2 – Sopchoppy area, well 2 pipeline improvement
- Phase 3 – Crawfordville – pipeline improvement to keep up with growth
- Phase 4 – Sopchoppy and Crawfordville

Mr. Delp presented a Task Order Memorandum for Sopchoppy Water System Phase 1 Improvements for consideration. The total fee is \$340,781.00, with \$140,000 being reimbursable from the grant, for a total cost to the city of \$200,781.00. No action was taken.

PWD Green informed the Council that FRWA will be attending the January 8 meeting to present the rate and capacity study to the Council.

City Clerk Schilling reported Council must complete the required Form 6. All information must be included and submitted on-line.

The financials and adjustments were approved by signature of the Council.

The city received one bid for the FWC FBIP Grant. With the required ADA changes the bid was submitted for \$689,439.00. The city can either pay the difference of more than \$600,000 or ask for more funding in the next grant cycle. Dewberry stated they can apply again, adding additional information to the application. The Council requested Dewberry submit a funding request in the next grant cycle. Clerk Schilling, Andy Easton, and Dewberry will be meeting with FWC to discuss future grant applications and needs.

Clerk Schilling reminded everyone the Christmas dinner will be held Thursday, December 21, at 6:30 p.m. at Angelo's.

PWD Green stated Wakulla County has voted to reduce the wellhead protection requirements to match DEP and will be moving forward for approval, the purchase of the land on Harvey Pittman is complete, and the owner of the adjacent property at well 2 would entertain talks if the city is ever interested in the property.

Vice Mayor Rudd stated the bike path sign at the Dollar General obstructs the view while trying to pull out on Sopchoppy Highway and would like to see if the sign can be moved back some.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m. Motion by McKenzie, second by Rudd.