

Canton, Georgia

*110 Academy Street
Canton, Georgia 30114*



Minutes - Final - Final

Monday, August 23, 2021

4:00 PM

Special Called Meeting

City Hall Auditorium

**110 Academy Street
City Council**

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Grant.

Members Present:

*Mayor Bill Grant
Mayor Pro Tempore JoEllen Wilson
Councilmember Shawn Tolan
Councilmember Brooke Schmidt
Councilmember Sandy McGrew
Councilmember Will Carlan
Mr. Billy Peppers, City Manager
Mr. Nathan Ingram, Assistant City Manager
Mr. Bobby Dyer, City Attorney
Mr. Stephen Merrifield, Police Chief
Ms. Lorrie Waters, Human Resources Director
Ms. Melissa Forrester, Finance Director
Ms. Lauren Johnson, Communications and Marketing Specialist
Ms. Annie Fortner, City Clerk
Mr. Mike Morgan, Information Technology Director*

Absent:

Councilmember Nick Estes

2. Discussion and Possible Action on a Local State of Emergency Related to Public Health and Safety

City Attorney Bobby Dyer discussed the previous Emergency Declaration approved by Council in March of 2020. The order has been updated to make virtual meetings possible as deemed necessary by the Mayor for Council meetings or by the City Manager for staff or other committee meetings. The order also stated the Mayor or City Manager has the authority to enact rules for employees and for City facilities. Mr. Dyer informed Council of the recent changes of the Open Meetings Act and added this order would allow the City to go to virtual meetings. Councilmember Carlan discussed the rise in COVID-related cases within hospitals across the state and stated he believes masks should be used in City buildings. Councilmember Schmidt stated she agrees with Councilmember Carlan and discussed the high rates within the school district. Councilmember Tolan stated he fully supports masks. Mayor Pro Tempore Wilson suggested requiring vaccinations for all employees. Councilmember McGrew stated she supports masks in City buildings and would like to do everything possible to help support hospitals. City Manager Billy Peppers discussed how other communities have covered the cost of time off from work for employees due to COVID for those who are vaccinated while those who are unvaccinated must utilize their Personal Time Off (PTO) hours. Mr. Peppers stated there are certain vaccinations which are federally required and those that are required at the state level. If the City wishes to move towards a vaccination policy, Mr. Peppers stated he would first like to have a conversation with the City's employment attorney. Mr. Peppers discussed the previous mask policy for City buildings stating masks were recommended for citizens and staff were to wear masks within public spaces or when social distancing could not be done. Councilmember Schmidt stated she did not want a full mask mandate. Councilmember Schmidt stated she supports incentivizing vaccines and would

like Council to lead by example. Mr. Peppers further discussed the previous City policy stating meetings which were not necessary to be held in person were done virtually, meetings which were held in person had spacing between individuals, and employees were asked to wear a mask when social distancing could not be done. Mr. Peppers stated he would bring Council options for incentivizing or encouraging vaccinations in two weeks. Councilmember Tolan asked if masks would be offered to the public. Mr. Peppers stated yes. Councilmember Tolan stated he supported the time off incentives. Councilmember Carlan suggested looking at other alternatives such as monetary incentives. Mr. Peppers discussed the monetary incentives given in Moultrie, GA. Mayor Grant stated if Council approved the emergency ordinance it would allow Mr. Peppers to establish the same mask policy in City facilities as previously done. Mr. Peppers discussed that each committee or board can decide how they would like to meet. Mr. Dyer informed he will amend the emergency ordinance to clarify "Council Committee Chairs" and stated Mr. Peppers can work with other committees. Councilmember Schmidt made a motion to approve the emergency ordinance with the amendment to section #4 to read "City Council Committee Chairperson". Councilmember Carlan seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

3. Adjourn

Councilmember Carlan made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Tolan seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Bill Grant, Mayor

Attest:

Annie Fortner, City Clerk

Dates Minutes Approved by Council