



CITY OF BROOKLET  
104 CHURCH ST. BROOKLET, GA 30415 \*(912) 842-2137 \*FAX (912) 842-5877

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Joe Grooms III, Mayor  
Nicky Gwinnett, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Bradley Anderson, Councilman  
Rebecca Kelly, Councilwoman  
James Harrison, Councilman  
Johnathan Graham, Councilman

City Attorney  
Hugh Hunter

City Clerk  
Lori Phillips

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**WORK SESSION  
and  
CALLED MEETING  
MINUTES  
JULY 14, 2022  
6:30 PM**

**Members Present:** Mayor Joe Grooms, III, Councilmembers Nicky Gwinnett, Brad Anderson, Johnathan Graham, and James Harrison.  
City Clerk Lori Phillips was absent.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Joe Grooms, III
2. **INVOCATION:** Mayor Joe Grooms, III
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLIGANCE**
4. **APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA**
  - MOTION: Rebecca Kelly
  - SECOND: Nicky Gwinnett
  - AYES: Rebecca Kelly, Nicky Gwinnett, Brad Anderson, Johnathan Graham, and James Harrison
  - NAYES: None
  - Motion carried 5-0
5. **DISCUSSION:**
  - 5.1. **AN ORDINANCE TO REQUIRE CURBS AND GUTTERS WITHIN SUBDIVISIONS IN THE CITY.**

Per Councilman Anderson, "the first reading was done at the July 6, 2022 Called meeting, based on our conversation and what we actually approved, Attorney Hunters recommendation was since 5.1. and 5.2. are no longer in alignment with

what we agreed to do, his belief was that in terms of we needed to vote no if that was our decision because if you will notice later on, the ordinances at the very bottom are the two ordinances that he felt needed to be approved based on what council approved at the last meeting, so his advice if that was what all of council wanted to do then obviously council needed to vote no on 5.1. and 5.2. and then do the first readings on 5.10. and 5.11., that was his advice.”

Councilwoman Kelly asked, “do we do that tonight or do we do that at the next regular meeting?” Councilman Anderson stated, “we actually notified the paper, so this is a called meeting and a work session all in one.” Mayor Pro-Tem Gwinnett stated, “because this would have been the second reading, which would have been the time to vote, and that makes sense according to what the attorney said and I agree with the process.”

MOTION: Nicky Gwinnett  
SECOND: Brad Anderson  
AYES: None  
NAYES: Rebecca Kelly, Nicky Gwinnett, Brad Anderson, Johnathan Graham, and James Harrison

Motion failed 0-5

**5.2. AN ORDINANCE TO REQUIRE CONCRETE CULVERTS FOR ACCESS DRIVEWAYS WITHIN PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY OF MUNICIPAL STREETS WITHIN THE CITY OF BROOKLET.**

MOTION: Nicky Gwinnett  
SECOND: Brad Anderson  
AYES: None  
NAYES: Rebecca Kelly, Nicky Gwinnett, Brad Anderson, Johnathan Graham, and James Harrison

Motion failed 0-5

**5.3. DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED SEWER PROJECT (Bennett/Parker)**

Wesley Parker introduced Brett Bennett, a consultant, to the Mayor and Council. Wesley stated, “the engineering part of this project is pretty simple, you have a pump and a pipe, that’s engineering 101, the rest of the project is pretty complex. How do we fund the project? How do we negotiate with the city of Statesboro? How much should we pay the city of Statesboro? How much should we charge our citizens? Who should we serve first? How do we pay for it? These are some questions that Brett Bennett will be able to help with. Brett gained most of his experience with the city of Springfield, he was the city manager there for twelve years. The city of Springfield owned a treatment plant, they treated the sewage for the city of Guyton, so very similar to what we are talking about except we would be sending our sewage to the city of Statesboro. He’s been on the city of Statesboro side as the organization accepting the sewage, collecting the sewage, treating the sewage, disposing of it and it’s been in those negotiations with the city of Guyton. After he stopped there, he opened up a consulting business and one of his first clients was the city of Guyton, they had him come in as an interim city manager

and then again, the city of Guyton was on the opposite side so they were the ones selling the sewage, so he's been on both sides of this."

Per Brett Bennett, "I'm an accountant by education, I was a finance director for the city of Rincon for about two years, did local government non-profit auditing for about three years before I got into the local government side, moved to Springfield, my hometown, grew up in Springfield, still live in Effingham. As Wesley said, I was there for twelve years, I left on great terms. I started a consulting firm, one of the biggest things I wanted to do was the interim manager role, there is a huge need for city managers because they do not last for very long. I helped Guyton get their finances in order with the water/sewer system and their financing with their waste water treatment plant. The next thing I did in the consulting world was the city of Harlem. They had a GEFA loan and had plans designed to build a waste water plant and spend about ten million dollars, and got a little concerned about the money, I came in, ran some figures, projections of what it could do, the kind of growth they would have to have to fund it and they ended up selling their sewer system to Columbia County because they realized quickly, they couldn't afford it. A good bit of what I have done in my consulting time tends to be around water and sewer and capital needs for doing that and operations cost and that kind of stuff. Now I have changed gears completely, I still do a little bit of stuff, if it wasn't for Wesley calling me, I probably would not be here right now, Wesley is a good man and he has done all my municipal engineering work and I can trust him. So now I am doing real estate development and seems to be a little more fun and financially a little more rewarding. I still enjoy local government and I think a lot of why I quit is because it was my hometown and just got burnt out. That's my work history."

Councilman Anderson stated, "is one of the things in terms of, my concern is this, we have a two-million-dollar matching grant, so we have the equivalent of four million dollars, we really have no clue of the total cost it would take to get it all the way back to town, but then that's nobody using it. Now we've had an estimate of 4, 4.2, 4.3 million to pipe it back to town, to create the infrastructure but that's nobody in town hooked to it. My concern is, I don't want to tie the citizens of Brooklet with debt because most of the people who probably need that sewage system the most, more rapidly, we're going to end up tearing up your infrastructure in the city, which means you have to replace it. So, at what point does it become cost effective for us to do the project?" Per Brett Bennett, "running the numbers is the easy part, I would assume there are areas that do need sewer, I would assume there are some lower income areas that can do things like CBG grants which can pay for a lot of infrastructure and get additional customers because at the end of the day they are still customers, so that would be some of the things I would think about and it would take some time. Again, I would need to know how many customers."

Per Wesley, "800 to 1000, that's what the city of Statesboro promised us as a starting point." Per Councilman Anderson, "obviously we would want someone to negotiate some type of long-term contract because we do not want to do this for a short period of time and then not have access to information. I think what we would want, especially if we grow, newer subdivisions, the ability to force them into using your sewage system, so obviously if that is the case, we want to be able to expand the number of users, in users and in some contractual way to do that sounds like you have had experience in that kind of business." Brett stated, "the biggest value I could bring in on that negotiation side of that contract because there are a lot of



potential pit falls in that. One of the biggest things is growth, capacity growth, future rate increases, over time, what does it look like at the end of the turn, those are some of the obvious things you have to be sure of." Per Mayor Grooms, "our source of revenue is very limited." Per Councilman Graham, "my concern growth and adding to and being prepared for that car plant that is coming in. I understand growth going towards Statesboro but the growth on the Southside of the city and if we want to expand to take advantage of what lands, houses might become available." Per Brett, "the most important part is the agreement with the city of Statesboro, the service delivery agreement, everyone needs to be familiar with the service delivery agreement because there are some financial areas that would be beneficiary for the city of Brooklet." Per Brett, "The negotiation with Statesboro needs to come first and then from there, building a road map of how to proceed forward with helping make decisions."

**5.4. DISCUSSION OF WELL #3 CONSTRUCTION (Parker)**

Potential places to put a well, we are going to put it in the center of town, by the water tank. It's cheaper energy wise, you're not having to pump it across the city; we're going to put it on the Southside or the Northside. Wesley doesn't have a concrete answer tonight but what we do know is that, we ran a 24-hour pressure test on the system with the tank levels and now we know how far we can run the system and that is not very far. We can only go roughly, to the Cambridge development going North on the right. The tank is not high enough, it is a small tank. We are limited and a lot of growth is coming this way. To get higher pressure, you have to build a higher tank. A new tank needs to be close to the current tank. We need to find some land for well. Mayor Grooms and Councilman Gwinnett will talk to the church about selling the city a piece of their property for the well to go on.

**5.5. DISCUSSION FY23 BUDGET TIMELINE (Grooms/Anderson)**

We are operating under a spending resolution, which means we can spend 1/12 of the last approved budget. Without payroll, we've already spent \$46,000.00 of our \$106,598.04 we can spend. This will be the first payroll and there will be one more at the end of the month. In reality, this month, we will need to make some decisions because of the truck payment, as to which bills, we postpone and pay in August just simply because our last approved budget was \$1.279 million. Someone needs to take over the budget process and develop a budget, otherwise, we will be in this same situation every month. Once we approve a tentative budget, we will need to advertise it for public hearings and then we will need to approve the final budget. Councilman Graham has agreed that he will try to work on the budget with Councilman Anderson's help. Mayor Grooms will help as much as he can.

**5.6. DISCUSSION OF RENTAL FEES FOR COMMUNITY CENTER (Kelly)**

July 1<sup>st</sup>, we put new fees in place. Councilwoman Kelly suggest that we reduce the fee rate because if nobody rents it, we will have no income. As a city structure, it needs to generate its income, it needs to pay its bills. The BCDA and Kiwanis need to be transparent. Both claim and make allegations that they are providing services for Brooklet, in terms of, it's all about bettering Brooklet, surely, that is not their intent, but what we do know is both agencies are not transparent with what they're doing

for the city of Brooklet. We do know that Kiwanis does provide annually, \$3,000.00 plus to help offset the operational cost of the cemetery, which is a gift, they also provided a projector and some of the audio-visual technology. We don't necessarily know specifically what BCDA has done for the city of Brooklet. What they should do is come to the table and say we have provided these things in fy21, and fy22. Currently, they are both supposed to pay \$100.00 per month for the use of the facility and they have not been doing so. Everyone agreed to leave it as it is until we see what the economy does in the future.

**5.7. DISCUSSION OF CITY MANAGER (Kelly/Anderson)**

We need someone who has a level of professionalism and who understands the needs of today that can keep the balls rolling. We need somebody who understands the needs of councilmembers and we need somebody who can begin working on finances. Stormie Hanners, the finance clerk, is leaving and we have one employee who is considering going to part-time, however, we do not need part-time work, we need full time work. We may have the opportunity to do some restructuring without a significant impact in the administration budget. The organization is awful, it's a mess. There is a reason local government went to a professional management. It's also hard when you have a business running with seven people, you hire someone to run the city, you set the policy and they operate within their policy. The biggest key is, you have to let them do it, you build the policy around them and let them do their job. They typically struggle when you do not let them do the job, and you try to do it for them. We need structure and currently, we do not have it. We need to look into somebody to lead the city. Councilwoman Kelly will reach out to GMA for more information.

**5.8. DISCUSSION OF ADDING PUBLIC SOFTWARE FOR ONLINE PAYMENTS (Anderson)**

Instead of back charging the individual, this charges us per transaction not through customer. Council needs to review the proposal and or maybe consider other options.

**5.9. DISCUSSION OF BUILDING INSPECTOR (Kelly)**

We need to figure out if we are going to contract with someone or hire someone. Currently, we are paying an individual who has agreed to fill in while needed.

**5.10. First Reading: AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY INCENTIVE FOR SUBDIVIDERS OR DEVELOPERS TO ALLOW FOR PAYMENT BY THE CITY FOR MATERIALS ONLY FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE CITY'S WATER SYSTEM, INCLUDING WITHIN THE SUBDIVISION, FROM AN EXISTING PUBLIC WATER MAIN WITHIN 1500 FEET OF ANY SUCH SUBDIVISION, FOR SUBDIVISIONS WHICH HAVE NOT HAD A FINAL PLAT APPROVED, WHERE THE SUBDIVIDER OR DEVELOPER HAS BEGUN THE PROCESS OF SUBMITTING OR DEVELOPER ENTERS INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE CITY TO DEVELOP THE STREETS WITHIN THE SUBDIVISION WITHOUT INVERTED CROWNS PRESENTLY ALLOWED UNDER CURRENT SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE, AND TO INSTALL CURB AND GUTTER, WHICH INCENTIVE SHALL EXPIRE SEPTEMBER 30, 2022.**

MOTION: Brad Anderson

SECOND: Nicky Gwinnett

AYES: Rebecca Kelly, Nicky Gwinnett, Brad Anderson, Johnathan Graham,  
and James Harrison  
NAYES: None  
Motion carried 5-0

**5.11. First Reading:** AN ORDINANCE TO REPEAL THE TEMPORARY INCENTIVE TO SUBDIVIDERS WHO HAVE A FINAL PLAT APPROVED THE EARLIER OF JUNE 30, 2024 OR THE EARLIER REPEAL OF SAID INCENTIVE, TO INSTALL SIDEWALKS WITHIN ANY SUCH SUBDIVISION.

MOTION: Brad Anderson  
SECOND: Nicky Gwinnett  
AYES: Rebecca Kelly, Nicky Gwinnett, Brad Anderson, Johnathan Graham,  
and James Harrison  
NAYES: None  
Motion carried 5-0

**5.12. Safety Update (Stanoff)**

On July 6<sup>th</sup>, we had a safety visit from GMA and we are in great shape. Currently, we do not have a policy on weapons in the work place and violence in the work place, therefore, that needs to be out together. He also said any work done outside the city of Brooklet should be under a contract. The Police Department is in excellent condition as well as Public Works. Mr. Jim got approval for a camera for the sanitation truck and approval for an eye washing station for Public Works. Also, Mr. Jim met with a Georgia Power representative and they have locked the extra meter boxes at the community center and we should see a significant change in the bill next month.

**6. MOTION TO ADJOURN**

MOTION: Brad Anderson  
SECOND: James Harrison  
AYES: Rebecca Kelly, Nicky Gwinnett, Brad Anderson, Johnathan Graham,  
and James Harrison  
NAYES: None  
Motion carried 5-0

Approved this 15 day of September 2022.

  
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Joe A. Grooms, III, Mayor

  
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Lori Phillips, City Clerk