CITY OF BOWMAN

Bowman City Hall Monthly meeting January 8th, 2025

# MEMBERS Present

Mayor, Scott Harpold Council Member, Mary Clark

Council Member, Henrietta Williams Council Member, Leah Carey Council Member, Betty Jo Maxwell Council Member, Jeff Spratlin Attorney, Adam Nelson

# STAFF PRESENT:

City Clerk, Tifany Verdell Assistant City Clerk, Kendra Jones

Mayor Scott Harpold called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The mayor mentioned the rules of decorum printed on the back of the agendas. He stated that not following these rules could result in being asked to leave the meeting.

Councilwoman Clark was asked to lead the prayer, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

# Approval of minutes:

The mayor called for a motion to approve the minutes from November 13th, 2024. Council member Spratlin made a motion to approve November 13th, 2024, minutes, 2nd by Councilwoman Williams. The mayor called for a vote by show of hands. The vote was 2 approved (Spratlin and Williams) 2 opposed (Clark and Maxwell) and one no vote (Carey) the motion passed. The mayor asked for a motion.to approve the December 11th, 2024, minutes. The attorney explained what goes into the minutes and what Georgia Law requires. Councilwoman Clark requested that the mayor help the assistant clerk Jones set out time to do the minutes two weeks in advance to allow everyone time to review them. The mayor asked the clerks if getting the minutes out earlier would be doable and they agreed two weeks would be fine. Council member Spratlin made a motion to table the December 11th minutes 2nd by Councilwoman Carey. The mayor called for a vote by show of hands. motion passed unanimously.

**3rd and Final Reading of the GMA Retirement Ordinance:** The mayor called for a motion to accept the final reading of the GMA Retirement Ordinance. Councilmember Spratlin made a motion to approve the 3rd and final reading of the GMA Retirement Ordinance, seconded by Councilwoman Williams. The mayor called for a vote by show of hands. The motion passed unanimously.

**Updated Pricing for the Community Center**: Councilwoman Williams passed out an updated pricing list for the Community Center. Highlighting the following changes: Rental per day $300.00, one-time kitchen usage fee: $50.00, repass fee: $150.00, and the hourly rate of $25.00 per hour (Under 4 hours), decorating ½ a day: $50.00, decorating full day: $100.00, and the hours changed to out by 12 am.

Councilwoman Williams made a motion to accept the new pricing and time change for the community center,2nd by Councilmember Spratlin. The mayor called for a vote by show of hands motion passed unanimously.

**Resolution for the upcoming election:** The Mayor reviewed the resolution and asked for any discussion. Councilwoman Williams made a motion to accept this resolution, seconded by Council member Spratlin. The mayor called for a vote by show of hands. The motion passed unanimously.

**Gas rates:** Council member Spratlin expressed that the current issue with the gas rate is the city currently is not charging enough to cover the gas department expenses during the off-season. He suggested based on information from the gas authority to raise the current rate to 16 dollars for residential and 20 dollars for commercial from 9.50 dollars. Council member Spratlin made a motion to raise the gas rate from $9.50 to 16 for residential and 20 for commercial to go into effect on February billing. The mayor called for discussion. Councilwoman Williams suggested raising the rates in April when the weather has gotten a little warmer, due to several citizens being on fixed incomes and usage would be down. Councilmember Spratlin explained that the change would not affect the usage just the base rate. He went on to explain that Bowman is at the bottom when it comes to rates and Elberton is planning to raise their rates. Motion failed for lack of a second.

**3rd Reading of the Decorum Ordinance:** The attorney went over the important need for the Decorum Ordinance and how it helps at meetings and with discussions. The mayor called for a motion. Motion from Councilwoman Williams to accept the 3rd and final reading of the Decorum Ordinance, 2nd by Councilmember Spratlin. The mayor called for a vote by show of hands vote was 2 approved and 3 opposed. 2 approved (Spratlin, Williams) 3 opposed (Clark, Maxwell, Carey) Motion failed.

**Mayor Pro Tempore Position:** The mayor read the requirements and the obligations for the Mayor Pro Tempore Position and asked the Council to discuss and choose who they would like to fill this position for the year 2025. He explained this is a one-year term and vote must be done each year to elect a member. Councilwoman Williams made a motion to elect Jeff Spratlin as mayor pro tempore, but no second. Motion failed. A discussion was had. Councilwoman Williams made another motion to elect Councilmember Spratlin as mayor pro tempore for 2025, seconded by Councilmember Spratlin. The mayor called for a vote by show of hands motion failed vote was 2-3.2 approved (Spratlin, Williams) 3 opposed (Maxwell, Clark, Carey) Mayor explained if no one is chosen moving forward there will be no mayor pro temp until one is elected at the next meeting. Councilwoman Maxwell made a motion to reelect Councilwoman Carey as the mayor pro tempore, seconded by Councilwoman Clark, The Mayor called for a vote by show of hands. Motion passed 3-2. 3 approved (Clark, Carey, Maxwell) 2 opposed (Spratlin, Williams).

**New Committee Placement:** Mayor Harpold explained he had regrouped the committees based on his research from other counties and decided to create 5 new committees. He encouraged the council to think about which committee they feel they can do the best work in and let him know before the next meeting. The new committees are:

1. Budget, finance, and audit- helps monitor budgets and audits
2. Licenses, inspections, and zoning- working with bureau veritas, new ordinances, etc.
3. Parks and recreation, cultural affairs and environment, streets, and services, transportation and infostructure committee- work to improve parks, organize the city's cultural affairs, monitor and upkeep city street repairs, and monitor and upkeep the public works departments (gas, and water).
4. Economic community development jobs, city buildings, and library committee- help to follow the comprehensive plan through economic development by working with the county and city, helping citizens with job searching, and upkeep and running of the library
5. Special events committee- running city events, monitoring neighborhoods, creating a newsletter monthly, and helping improve housing and enrichment in the city.

**Mayor Report:**

Mayor Harpold informed the audience and council of the winter storm update that was predicted to happen the coming weekend. He questioned the council about closing city hall on Friday, January 10th, 2025, if the weather turns bad. A discussion was had. Council member Spratlin made a motion that if the schools close then city hall will be closed as well on Friday, January 10th, 2025, seconded by Councilwoman Williams. The mayor asked for a vote by show of hands. The motion passed unanimously. Next was the capital improvement budget. Mayor Harpold discussed the items he wants to have in the budget as follows: City Park (57,000), improvement of city roads (500,00), downtown improvement (blacktop the shopping area), repainting, murals, and signs (40,000) Repair and replacement of city gas lines (100,000), vehicle upkeep and repairs (40,000). Total in the estimate: $287,000.00. Mayor Harpold asked for a motion to approve this budget. Motion made by Councilwoman William to approve the capital improvement budget for 2025, seconded by Council member Spratlin. The mayor called for a vote by show of hands, motion failed. The vote was 2-3. 2 approved (William Spratlin) 3 opposed (Clark, Carey, Maxwell).

# Council member Reports:

**Councilwoman Carey:** Councilwoman Carey asked a question on behalf of several Bowman citizens. The citizens wanted to know what the plan from the mayor is to help with the teenagers and cars traveling on the new park road at night. Mayor expressed the city has purchased a security system to help monitor the road and neighborhoods.

**Councilwoman Williams:** Spoke on the success of the Christmas Parade which resulted in 3 winners: 1st place was Holly Springs Church, 2nd place was Jakeem Fortson, and 3rd place was the Shriners. She informed everyone about the Senior Luncheon to start on January 14, 2025, at noon.

**Councilman Spratlin:**  He spoke on speaking with Stratlin & Sons Company about a mixture to be laid on the roads to help with the paving process. He stated that none of the surrounding counties have used this product during road repairs and if the city is good without the mixture they can start repairing roads the next week. (January 13th). He asked for a decision to be made tonight so the city can either start or wait until the mixture is ready. Councilmember Spratlin made a motion to start road repairs without the use of the mixture 2nd by Councilwoman Williams. Councilwoman Williams posed the question about the purpose of the product that the company wants to use. Council member Spratlin explained the product is just extra protective for the roads with an extra expense. The mayor called for a vote by show of hands. The motion passed unanimously.

**Councilwoman Clark: no report**

**Councilwoman Maxwell:** expressed her enjoyment with the development committee and she informed everyone that a class was given this past month and expressed it was very informative.

**Attorney Report**: nothing to report.

**Public Works Report**: City Worker Ivester reported on the gas line needing repairs. He also reported on working with Councilwoman Williams regarding the gas bill at the community center to lower the cost per month.

**Hospital Authority:**  Reported no meeting was held for the Hospital board for December 2024. Will have financial reports at the February meeting. Announced the 4th annual Casino Night on January 25th, 2025, for all to come out and support the hospital.

**Library Report:** Read by Councilwoman Williams. Books checked out 126, dvds18, park passes 1, 173 in-house visits, computer users 39, Wi-Fi 58, local prints $21.89, and pines fees $9.90. Total: $31.75 for the month.

**Speaker:**

**Angie Harpold:** Expressed some concerns she had with the council members of Bowman and how she wants Bowman to be better and do better. She informed everyone that a recall had been started on January 8th, 2025, for Councilwoman Leah Carey and Councilwoman Betty Jo Maxwell.

Mayor Harpold called for a motion to adjourn. Motion from Councilwoman Maxwell, 2nd by Council member Spratlin. The mayor called for a vote by show of hands. The motion passed unanimously.

**Meeting Adjourned**