

**City of Bowdon
Third Public Hearing and
Mayor and Council Meeting
Monday, September 18, 2023
7:00PM**

Mayor and Council Chambers, 182 Grammar School Road

I.- VI. Agenda Items:

The Mayor and City Council met for a called meeting and third Public Hearing for the millage rate on Monday, September 18th, 2023. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Jim Chaffin at 7:00PM. The invocation was led by Mayor Pro-tem Jan Johnson and was followed with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members present: Mayor Jim Chaffin
Mayor Pro-tem Jan Johnson
Councilmember Marty Johnson
Councilmember Wes McEntyre
Councilmember Randy Saxon

Staff present: City Manager Gary Bullock
City Attorney Kevin Drummond
Main Street Director Jan Gibbs
Police Chief Mark Brock
City Clerk Susan Pierce

The invocation was led by Mayor Pro-tem Jan Johnson and was followed with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes from August 14, 2023 were approved with no objections. City Clerk Susan Pierce noted that items VII. C and IX. C. on tonight's agenda could be removed; the manager from Family Dollar did not make it in to be fingerprinted, so the approval will have to be postponed until October 9. The agenda modification was approved with no objections.

VII. Public Hearing

- A. 2023 Millage Rate Increase – Mr. Bullock stated that over the past few years, we have been able to roll the millage rate back. This year we have had significant increases in expenses, such as sanitary services and health and liability insurances, as well as a reduction in Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) receipts. The cost of living has risen as well, which affects the city as well as individual citizens. We have already pulled \$57,000 from our operating reserve account to balance the budget. The staff recommendation was originally to keep the current rate of 7.302; after discussion and previous public hearings, the recommendation now is a 50% rollback, which would be 6.860. Councilmember Marty Johnson noted that we had taken the full rollback in the last several years, but the rollback rate from the county was more this year than in previous years. Mr. Bullock also said that with the large number of appeals, the digest may actually go down before the final bills are sent out. Mr. Tim Tant of 302 Mill St. said he feels that with the increase in valuations the city will still collect more property tax than in previous years. Paula Tant asked if the sanitary service company was the only one to bid. Mr. Bullock noted that there were only 2 final bidders, and we went with the lowest bid. Ms. Tant also said that she was strongly opposed to not taking the full rollback. Mr. Tant asked how much was in the reserve account. We have approximately \$230,000 in the operating reserve account. It was noted that until a few years ago, we were having to take out a Tax Anticipation Note (TAN) to make it through the year until property tax revenue was collected. Our total budget is \$2.5 million.

Ms. Erica Henderson of 419 E. College St., asked about the sanitary service contract and the difference in the budget amounts. She wondered if there would be another increase to the customers. Mr. Bullock replied that there would only be an increase if the tipping fees and/or fuel prices go up.

Ms. Alli Rahr of 101 Bartlett Circle asked if the city had sought new industry coming to the city. She feels people and businesses will be leaving Bowdon with taxes and fees going up and no jobs to offer. Mayor Chaffin and Mr. McEntyre both stated that the city had been trying to get new industry to come to Bowdon for years. Ms. Rahr said businesses are currently closing in downtown Bowdon. Mayor Chaffin said that our Main Street director had been working hard to keep the businesses in the downtown area.

- B. Ordinance Update – to comply with Georgia’s updated Zoning Procedures law – City Attorney Kevin Drummond said that there were minor changes to the zoning procedures law concerning deadlines and how appeals are handled.

Mayor Chaffin announced that now the public hearing would be closed.

VIII. Public Comments

Cody Sanders, 317 Ellenwood Dr., asked if the millage rate would be voted on tonight.

IX. Business Session

- A. Approval of 2023 Millage Rate

Motion by Councilmember McEntyre to approve a full rollback of the millage rate to 6.418 as presented by Carroll County; second by Mayor Pro-tem Jan Johnson; vote was tied with Councilmember McEntyre and Mayor Pro-tem Jan Johnson voting in favor of the full rollback and Councilmembers Marty Johnson and Randy Saxon voting against the motion. Mayor Chaffin then cast the deciding vote, voting against the motion to approve a full rollback. Motion failed to pass.

Motion by Councilmember Marty Johnson to approve a 50% partial rollback of the millage rate which would be 6.860; second by Councilmember Saxon; before the vote, Councilmember McEntyre expressed his displeasure with the motion; vote was tied with Councilmembers Marty Johnson and Randy Saxon voting in favor of the motion and Councilmember McEntyre and Mayor Pro-tem Jan Johnson voting against the motion. Mayor Chaffin again cast the deciding vote, voting for the 50% rollback as presented. Motion carried.

- B. Approval of Ordinance Update to comply with Georgia’s updated Zoning Procedures Law

Motion by Mayor Pro-tem Jan Johnson to approve the ordinance update as presented; second by Councilmember Saxon; motion carried unanimously.

- C. Approval of Main Street Board appointments – Amanda South and Wayne Crook.

Motion by Mayor Pro-tem Jan Johnson to approve Amanda South being appointed to the Main Street Board; second by Councilmember McEntyre, motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Councilmember Saxon to approve Wayne Crook being appointed to the Main Street Board; second by Mayor Pro-tem Jan Johnson; motion carried unanimously.

D. Family Dollar alcohol license (removed from agenda)

Mr. Rob Hosack spoke from Family Dollar concerning the alcohol license. He assured Council that the requirements would be met before the October 9th meeting.

E. City Manager reports – Mr. Bullock said there would be a Planning Commission public hearing for Eagle Environmental on October 5, and which would also include a zoning change request for 249 Eason St. and an updated definition of convenience stores in our ordinances.

F. Department Reports

X. Financial Session

No discussion.

Motion by Mayor Pro-tem Jan Johnson to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel; second by Councilmember McEntyre; motion carried unanimously.

Executive Session

Motion by Mayor Pro-tem Jan Johnson to exit Executive Session; second by Councilmember Marty Johnson; motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Councilmember Marty Johnson to appoint Chad South to serve on the Planning Commission in place of Brenda West, who declined to renew her appointment; second by Mayor Pro-tem Jan Johnson; motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Councilmember McEntyre to adjourn the meeting; second by Councilmember Marty Johnson; motion carried unanimously.

X. Adjournment

Mayor Jim Chaffin

City Clerk Susan Pierce