

The Lyerly Town Council met for their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 13, 2024 at Lyerly Community Center. Those in attendance were:

James Ferguson
Phil Brooks
Shirley Davis
Juanita Baker
Gwen Fisher

August 13, 2024

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ferguson at 7:00pm.

Approval of Minutes – Mayor Ferguson asked if anyone had questions about the minutes. Juanita Baker said that she had a few. In the March 7th minutes, we mentioned the lights at the ball fields. She asked if we ever got some put up. Sally Kerce said that we didn't. We were going to get a price, but we knew it would be super expensive. If you want us to get a price, we can get one. Juanita Baker said not to worry about it unless a lot of people start fussing about us not having lights. In the April 23rd minutes, we talked about a sign for the Ragland building. Sally Kerce asked the mayor if he had found out anything. He said that the sign for the Community Center came from Hi Tech. He said that we could just paint it on the front of the building. Phil Brooks said that he thinks it needs to be painted on both sides so that way you can see it from either direction. Mayor Ferguson said that he was just thinking that whatever that building ends up being used for, it would look like it belongs on the front and not the sides. Shirley Davis said that she still thinks that a plaque honoring the Ragland's would be the best thing. Then whatever goes in the building, it would be there and not interfere with their business sign. Mayor Ferguson said that he agrees with Shirley. Sally Kerce said that she would get a cost for a plaque and a sign. Juanita Baker made a motion to approve the December 19, 2023, February 13th, March 7th, April 23rd, June 13th & July 9th Minutes. Shirley Davis seconded. All in favor.

Millage Rate – Mayor Ferguson said that the current millage rate is 6.5%. The rollback for 2024 is lower, 6.153, because property values have gone up. He said that he would like for them to entertain making the millage rate 7%. Shirley Davis asked why. Mayor Ferguson said that it just keeps costing more and more just to operate. If we brought it up to 7%, it would increase our revenue by about \$10,000. For example, it's July, and we are not in the position to where we will need to borrow money or anything, but we have less money than we did in July last year. Juanita Baker asked if we go to 7%, would that be enough to keep us from having to go up next year. Mayor Ferguson said probably. Phil Brooks asked what the increase on the tax bill of a \$100,000 house would be. Mayor Ferguson did the math and said that it would increase about \$20. Gwen Fisher said that she would just like everyone to keep in mind that people are still in shock from the rise in values and then we would have this increase on top of that. Shirley Davis said if we can get by staying at 6.5%, she thinks we should. Phil Brooks said that we would get by, but he would rather bite the bullet now. Juanita Baker said that if we do go with 7%, maybe next year we can hold steady or maybe even rollback instead of going up. Gwen Fisher said that we could hold it steady this year and maybe raise it next year. Mayor Ferguson said that if we leave it at 6.5%, in January, we will be discussing raising water rates. Shirley Davis said that if we will have to raise other things, she'd rather keep the raise in taxes. Mayor Ferguson said that he thinks slightly raising property taxes will be less of a headache on our customers than raising water rates. Juanita Baker made a motion to go with a 7% millage rate. Phil Brooks seconded. Shirley Davis and Gwen Fisher voted no. Shirley Davis said that a lot of people are struggling. A lot of people in Lyerly live on a fixed income. Phil Brooks

said that most of those people probably live in a \$100,000 house and will only have an increase of about \$20. Juanita Baker said that we are all in the same boat. We all have to pay property taxes because we all have our own houses. Phil Brooks said we are voting for ourselves to pay more money. Mayor Ferguson said he would entertain a motion on 6.5%. Gwen Fisher made a motion to go with a 6.5% millage rate. Shirley Davis seconded. Juanita Baker and Phil Brooks voted no. Mayor Ferguson asked about 6.75%. He said that he doesn't mind breaking the tie, but he would rather everyone agree. Gwen Fisher made a motion for 6.75%. Phil Brooks seconded. All in favor. Sally Kerce said that we will have to hold three public meetings, and she will let everyone know that dates she comes up with.

Property for Sale on Cemetery Road – Mayor Ferguson said that there is property for sale on Cemetery Road. Everyone should have a map. A lady is talking about buying it, but it is only .33 acres, and she wants to know if she will be able to put a dwelling on it. Phil Brooks said no. Shirley Davis said that if we break the rule for her, we'll have to break it for everyone. Phil Brooks made a motion to not grant a variance to put a dwelling on that lot since it isn't ½ acre. Juanita Baker seconded. All in favor.

Worker's Comp and Property/Liability Insurance – Mayor Ferguson said that Tony Jones at Flegel Insurance has called and would like to give us a quote on our insurance. We currently have insurance through the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA). We do not have to allow anyone to quote us. We can just keep doing what we are doing. We must notify GMA in writing if we plan to accept other quotes. Shirley Davis said that if we get a quote, we don't have to go with it. Mayor Ferguson said no. Phil Brooks said that he wants it to be identical coverage to what we have now. Shirley Davis asked if the quote is lower, are we required to go with it. Mayor Ferguson said no. Phil Brooks made a motion to let Flegel give us a quote on insurance. Gwen Fisher seconded. All in favor.

Mayor Ferguson said that he wanted to let everyone know that Jimmy Taylor called him, and the trustees approved handing the cemetery over to the town. He isn't sure when it will be completed but the attorney is drawing up a contract. It will outline what the future city government is allowed to do with the cemetery. And essentially, they aren't allowed to do anything other than maintain it, sell graves, etc.

Gwen Fisher made the motion to adjourn. Phil Brooks seconded. All in favor.
Meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Mayor

Town Clerk