

## REGULAR MEETING – CAIRO MAYOR & COUNCIL – JANUARY 8, 2024

The January 8, 2024, Regular Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers with Mayor Booker T. Gainor, IV presiding. Present were Councilmen Demario Bryden, James H. Douglas, Timothy Gurley, Annette Higdon, and Charles Renaud. Staff Members in attendance were City Manager Julian Brown, City Clerk Dana W. Barfield, and City Attorney Tom Lehman. Cairo Messenger Reporter Mesha Wind was also in attendance.

**INVOCATION:** The Invocation was given by Mayor Booker T. Gainor, IV.

**Swearing in of Newly Elected Council Members by ~~City Attorney Tom Lehman~~ Mayor Booker T. Gainor, IV.** Mayor Gainor swore in newly elected Councilman Timothy Gurley, Councilwoman Annette Higdon, and Councilman Charles Renaud.

**Council Appointment of Mayor Pro Tem for 2024.** Motion to appoint Councilman Douglas as Mayor Pro Tem was made by Councilman Byrden, seconded by Councilman Gurley and passed unanimously by all Council Members.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Motion to approve the agenda was made by Councilman Byrden, seconded by Councilman Gurley and passed unanimously by all Council Members.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

**Re-Approval of Regular Meeting – March 14, 2022.** Motion to approve the minutes was made by Councilman Byrden, seconded by Councilman Gurley, and unanimously approved by all Council Members.

**Regular Meeting – December 11, 2023.** Motion to approve the minutes was made by Councilman Douglas, seconded by Councilman Byrden, and unanimously approved by all Council Members.

### DELEGATIONS:

**James Stanely – Disc Golf in Azalea Park.** – Mr. James Stanely of 203 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue E. Havana, FL explained to the council that his company does pop-up disc golf events around the area and he had previously worked with Cairo's tourism department and had an event in Davis Park. He said what he would like to do is continue to have pop-up events in Cairo for free and Azalea Park is an underutilized park that could definitely be used for this type of event. He went on to say his company does everything for free for the event. He explained that pop-up/disc golf was just like frisbee where you throw a frisbee into a basket. Councilman Douglas questioned the fact that he was first doing this event in Davis Park but now wanted to move to Azalea Park because of needing more room. Mr. Stanley said that Davis Park is a little busier in the summer and he had noticed that Azalea did not have that much going on and disc golf brings more attention to the area. Councilman Douglas suggested Mr. Stanley get with City Manager Brown to find out if there are any liability issues with having this type of an event and then come back before council with dates to reserve the park. City Manager Brown asked Mr. Stanley did he not want to make this a permanent course. Mr. Stanley said yes he was, but first they needed to do the pop-ups to bring attraction to the area and then he and his company would come in and put in a permanent course. Councilman Renaud told Mr. Stanley that he had heard that alcohol was brought to these events and he would need to understand that would not be able to happen since they are being held on city property.

### SPECIAL EVENTS:

**Consider Special Event Permit – M. L. K. Collaborative, January 15, 2024, from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm at Holder Park, Renee Gee-Theophille - Applicant.** Mrs. Renee Gee-Theophille of 633 Copeland Avenue, Cairo GA explained they plan to do nothing different than any other year. Councilman Gurley said that it was mentioned that there are two permits, one has a time of 11:00 am to 6:00 pm at the park, Mrs. Gee-Theophille said she knew they had different times and they planned to be completed by 5:00 pm rather than 11:00 am to 6:00 pm. Councilman Gurley then asked what was going on at the park within that time frame. Mrs. Gee-Theophille said that the president of the collaborative was there, she was only assisting, he would be able to answer any questions. Councilman Douglas said that Mr. Shaunta Dismuke had also asked about the property beside the park; asking if they needed it for parking. Shaunta Dismuke of 176 Lakeshore Road, Ochlocknee, GA explained they needed the backside of the park to control the people participating in the program. Over the years it had been hard once the parade was over to get people to come over and listen to the Grand Marshal speak, so they decided last year to setup the stage on the backside of the park and it worked out very well. The City also helped us put up a barricade so we could block that area off from parking and was able to send them inside the park allowing more people to enjoy the program. Councilman Douglas said that a lot of the issues and complaints that he had heard in that area has been about parking and he understood that this was hard for them to deal with and the city may have to put no parking signs in the residential areas. Mr. Dismuke said they have a church and a couple other locations that were going to allow them additional parking for the event. Councilman

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Byrden said that it did not matter where people parked at, the M. L. K. Collaborative Group was not going to be able to control that. There could be barricades and signs put up wherever and people were still going to find somewhere to park. The M. L. K. Collaborative Group needed to do what they needed to do to have a successful event. A lot of stereotypes make out like this event is what makes things happen and it is not, it is what comes after this event, when it is over. Mrs. Gee-Theophile said that usually the events agenda had whoever their talent was perform, then the introduction of the Grand Marshal, and finally the awards were given out, and they were normally finished around 2:00 pm. Her suggestion was that once they finish the event have the city keep the barricades in place to block that area off, because once they leave the street open that is when everything else happens. Mr. Dismuke said that last year the event went very well with law enforcement assisting. Mayor Gainor said that it was almost like there were two events happening on this day, your part of the day and then the later part of the day. This day is a big draw for a lot of communities outside of our community, this size crowd can easily overwhelm any size law enforcement personnel. He then asked Chief Santos if there was anyway, we could possibly ask the Grady County Sheriff's Office if they could lend support during this event. Chief Santos said that we could ask and we would have our full department on duty that day as well working until 1:00 am. Councilman Renaud said that one of the important things is that we all need to work together. Also, it will be clearly marked there is no alcohol or tobacco in the city park and we are not really worried about your crowd but more so the group coming after you. Mayor Gainor said there was another issue concerning vendors on city property and parking on the triangle area that the convenient store owns. Mayor Gainor asked about parking on the piece of property that belongs to the store owner. Councilman Gurley said he would not agree with that because when you do that it becomes a safety issue and felt that it was a terrible idea. Councilman Byrden said wherever you push them out of they are going to go somewhere else, then they are going to be in the street or wherever else. City Manager Brown said he appreciated everyone working together and their input, but wanted to add that city crews have to go in the next day and clean up using taxpayers' dollars to do so. Motion to approve the special event for M. L. K. Collaborative event was made by Councilman Byrden, seconded by Councilwoman Higdon, and unanimously approved by all Council Members.

**Consider Parade Permit – M. L. K. Collaborative, January 15, 2023, from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. Parade to begin at Roddenberry Memorial Library Parking Lot, South on Broad Street, Turning Right on MLK Avenue and Continuing to Holder Park, Shaunta Dismuke – Applicant.**

Motion to approve the parade permit for M. L. K. Collaborative was made by Councilman Renaud, seconded by Councilman Higdon, and unanimously approved by all Council Members. A motion to amend the time from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm was made by Councilman Byrden, seconded by Councilwoman Higdon, and unanimously approved by all Council Members.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Consider proposed FY2022-2023 Budget Amendments.** City Manager Brown explained that Finance Director Faircloth had provided the FY2022 – 2023 Budget Amendments and the city auditor Nick Valenti would present a full audit report presentation at the next council meeting. It was his recommendation to approve the budget amendment presented. Mayor Gainor asked since we have three new council members if we could have Finance Director Faircloth come and explain the budget amendments. City Manager Brown asked if Councilman Douglas would like to explain them since he was on the Finance Committee. Councilman Dougals explained the budget and the adoption process of how it was done each year. He then explained the budget adjustment reports and that they were the actual audit journal entries and what they pertained to. He said the reason we do this is so that we did not get a letter from the Georgia Department of Audits. You can amend your budget two years after the fact, but if you have a difference in overages or shortages, they would send you a letter that you would then have to deal with. He went on to say that he knew that it did not make much sense to laymen folks, but as a former auditor that was the main reason for budget amendments. By making the amendments when you look at your financial statement you will not be over or short in any line item by department. Motion to adopt the budget amendments as presented on the department level for the FY2022 – 2023 Budget Amendments, seconded by Councilman Renaud, Councilman Gurley said that three days in he felt that he needed a little more time to look it over before giving his decision. Mayor Gainor asked Councilman Douglas what would approving this today versus waiting for Mr. Valentin coming the next meeting. Councilman Douglas said the auditor had to have this before he could finalize the audit report. Mayor Gainor asked with the adjustments were we over or under. Councilman Douglas said we were over on revenue and under on expenditures, majority came from the balance in the group insurance account that is on our balance sheet that we see each month. Councilwoman Higdon said she felt she needed more time to review the amendments as well since she received it on Friday and had not had time to review due to a death in the family and to approve it was approving something she did not know much about. Councilman Douglas said he did not have a problem with that, but we would not get our financial statements until these were approved and were due December 31. He went on to say that as long as they were turned in within the month of January there usually is not a problem, but if not then the auditor will have to request an extension. Councilman Renaud stated that this was for the year prior, not the current year. Councilman

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Douglas responded yes, that was correct. Mayor Gainor then asked for a completion of the vote, with Councilman Byrden voting yes, and Councilman Gurley and Councilwoman Higdon voting no.

**REPORTS:**

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2023.**

- No Comments.

**REPORTS FROM CITY MANAGER:**

- City Crews were getting ready for the weather that is expected to come this evening. They are prepared and ready but will put safety first and will not send anyone out until the weather is safe. The linemen as well as other departments will have all hands-on deck in case something happens.

**REPORTS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL:**

- Councilman Byrden wished everyone a Happy New Year and expressed his appreciation to the new council members for running for council and wished them all much success in the future.
- Councilman Dougals welcomed all new council members and recommended they get a copy of the City Charter and familiarize themselves with it. He then asked Attorney Lehman about the nuisance abatement list that has expired permits and why they were not on a court list.
- Councilman Renaud said he appreciated all the leadership given and for all the individuals that chose to appear at the meeting. He went on to say that it should become a habit, people should be more involved in their city government. He added that he looked forward to working with Councilman Gurley and Councilwoman Higdon and hoped for a prosperous new year.
- Councilman Gurley said he was grateful to be apart of this team and thanked the audience for coming. He went on to say that he had spoken with City Manager Brown explaining that the council had to get out into the community not just have the community come to them. He felt the council needed to be able to ride along in the different districts so that people could know who they were and not just see their faces in the paper or when they come to meetings.
- Councilwoman Higdon said she looked forward to working with each of the councilman and that her goal was that they all do what is in the best interest of the citizens of Cairo; not having separate agendas but make sure all were at the table, and all move forward.
- Attorney Lehman said he had had the pleasure of speaking with a couple of the new council members and he felt that they had the commitment and best interest of the community at heart.
- Mayor Gainor welcomed the new council members stating that he knew they all had a heart of servitude and leadership. He then thanked City Clerk Barfield and HR Director Waters for their efforts in putting together the food pantry outside of City Hall. He went on to say that we have a loyal employment base and would like to look at retirement benefits. A lot of our employees are knocking at retirement's door, and we are having to find new talent to fill those leadership roles. Therefore, he would like to have a Human Resource Work Session to discuss what could be done to help this transition. He then said that he hoped the community would give the new council the same grace and respect as all other councils before them. They are all three leaders in their own respect and regard. He ended by challenging City Manager Brown to meet with department heads and find at least one new revenue source for their department.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business, a motion was made at 6:55 pm by Councilman Byrden and seconded by Councilman Gurley to adjourn the meeting.

**APPROVED:**

**ATTEST:**

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**BOOKER T. GAINOR, IV**

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**DANA W. BARFIELD, CITY CLERK**