



**Minutes**  
City Council Work Session  
April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
6:30pm

*Baldwin PD Training Center, 155 Willingham Avenue, Baldwin, GA 30511*

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Mayor Stephanie Almagno, Council member Erik Keith, Council member Joseph Satterfield, Council member Kerri Davis, Council member Maarten Venter, and Council member Alice Venter were all in attendance.

***Call Meeting to Order***

*Mayor Stephanie Almagno called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.*

**Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to strike New Business, Item 2: “Landlord Ordinance” from the agenda with a second by Alice Venter. Motion Carried 5-0.**

***Public Hearing***

Otter Zoning Variance Ordinance #2024-03140Z

Legal Counsel Bubba Samuels advised some revision to the ordinance to make it a special use permit. A special use permit is better suited for the situation than a variance, which are used in requests where following the law creates a hardship for the applicant. Samuels recapped the request to convert an upstairs office into a one-bedroom apartment in a commercially zoned building.

**In Favor:** *None came forward.*

**In Opposition:** *None came forward.*

*Legal Counsel Bubba Samuels opened the public hearing at 6:34 pm.*

***Old Business***

1. Animal Control Updates

CAO Emily Woodmaster presented an IGA for animal control services with Habersham County. At the previous council meeting, Council had requested Woodmaster present two modifications to the agreement with Habersham, who denied both requests and countered with the original agreement with a cost of \$18,455.58.

Council member Alice Venter stated that animal control is a small part of a larger conversation about service delivery, and that at least one representative from every city should be involved in these conversations. Venter stated that she is willing to accept the animal control agreement but that there are still things that needed to be addressed going forward and it must be a county-wide effort.

Council member Maarten Venter said that he would be agreeable to the IGA with a clear understanding that a set formula to tie down tax dollars needs to be established before next year’s agreement.

If Council declines to pay the \$18,455.58, Baldwin citizens will still have access to all services and facilities in Clarkesville, but Animal Control will not respond to any service calls inside city limits.

Habersham County has asked for a decision by April 30<sup>th</sup>. Council was in consensus to bring the animal control IGA forward for a vote on Monday night.

Samuels opened the floor again for the Otter SUP request. No one came forward in favor or in opposition. Council had no further questions and was in consensus to move forward with the second reading on Monday night.

*Samuels closed the public hearing at 7:00 pm.*

### ***New Business***

#### ~~2. Landlord Ordinance~~

#### 3. Utility Encroachment

Woodmaster presented a draft of a utility encroachment ordinance, which would allow Baldwin to require communication or utility companies to file for a permit before entering the City's right-of-way. Historically, companies would just dig without any prior notice and there are dangers of damaging City water and sewer lines. This ordinance would allow Baldwin to anticipate what goes in the ROW and provide recommendations on placement for those communication/utility companies. Going forward, the City would have a record of the type and location of these lines in the ROW. Additionally, this ordinance ensures what companies owe franchise fees to the City.

Council was in consensus to bring this forward for a vote at Monday's meeting.

#### 4. Updating Fee Schedules

Woodmaster explained to Council that all fees that the City charges (across all services and departments) are currently only found in documents relevant to the fee. She proposed consolidating all fees into one master fee schedule not only to provide ease of access for residents, business owners, and developers, but also to allow Council to annually review and adjust the fees as needed. Ordinances that currently list related fees would reference the master fee schedule, so individual ordinances would not need to be amended to update an individual fee.

Woodmaster reviewed all proposed changes and additions for both general fund and enterprise.

*Council member Alice Venter stepped out of the room at 7:35 pm and returned at 7:37 pm.*

Woodmaster requested Council review these fees and bring any questions or possible adjustments forward to be considered. The master fee schedule will not be presented for approval until the Water and Sewer Use Ordinance is completed and approved by Council.

5. Liability Insurance

Woodmaster presented a quote for liability insurance coverage from GIRMA for 2024-2025, which is due May 1<sup>st</sup>. There is a 17% increase over last year's cost due to inflation and an increase in the quality and quantity of vehicles in the City's fleet. The total cost would be \$125,664. Woodmaster stated that the City has utilized a private insurance entity in the past, but the benefits of being a GIRMA member outweigh the benefit of finding a new liability insurance provider.

Council was in consensus to bring this forward for a vote at Monday's meeting.

**Announcements**

- a. Join us for the 25<sup>th</sup> Baldwin Clean Up Day on Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm at the Baldwin Farmers' Market! Celebrate Earth Day by cleaning up Baldwin roads and planting a tree. Stew N Que is donating breakfast.
- b. Calling all local farmers and foodies! Join us on the second and fourth Saturday of May, June and July for the reFRESH market! Bring your fruits, vegetables, farm fresh eggs and other goods to City Hall for a FREE place to sell your fresh staples! From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., get in the sunshine for fresh groceries and unique food truck eateries. Vendor applications can be found at [www.cityofbaldwin.org](http://www.cityofbaldwin.org). Contact John at City Hall for more information.
- c. Council member Joseph Satterfield thanked the Baldwin Police Department and Chief Jones for hosting him for a ride-along this coming Friday and thanked the Baldwin Fire Department for the experience with the live burn last week.

**Adjournment**

**Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to adjourn the meeting with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 5-0 at 7:54 pm.**

  
Stephanie Almagno, Mayor

4/15/2024  
Date Approved by Council

  
Erin Gathercoal, City Clerk

