

At the Regular Council Meeting held on the above date the following members were present:

Mayor: Matt Seale  
City Council: Mona Paulk, Patrice Y.W. Manley, Lemora Moses,  
Steven Hudson, and Claire Clayton-Stone  
City Clerk: Lucile Middlebrooks  
City Attorney Warren Mixon  
Police Chief: Billy Hancock  
Assistant Public Director: Recarter Edge  
Assistant Public Director: Corneilus Hall

- First: Mayor Matt Seale called the meeting to order and determined a quorum, invocation by Rev. Emmanuel Ellison, and then the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was pledged and spoken by everyone.
- Second: Motion by Councilwoman Mona Paulk and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilman Lemora Moses to adopt the Agenda for Tuesday, March 2, 2021.  
All in favor say I – Voted 5 yes; Opposes none - Motion passed.
- Third: Motion by Councilwoman Mona Paulk and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilman Lemora Moses for the approval and adopting of the Minutes from the Regular Meeting of February 2, 2021.  
All in favor say I -Voted 5 yes; Opposes none – Motion passed.
- Fourth: Noise Ordinance  
Mayor Matt Seale deferred to Councilwoman Patrice Y.W. Manley. She read over the old Noise Ordinance with her requested changes. This is the first reading of the updated ordinance. The Noise Ordinance will be read again at the next Council meeting. No vote at this time.
- Fifth: Broadband Ready Certification  
Mayor Matt Seale read the Broadband Ready Certification Ordinance and briefly explained that this will benefit the City to have the capability to over additional broadband services within the City. This is the first reading of the Broadband Ready Certification Ordinance and the ordinance will be read again at the next Council Meeting. No vote at this time

## **ORDINANCE FOR A BROADBAND READY COMMUNITY**

As used in this ordinance, "broadband network project" means any deployment of broadband services.

As used in this ordinance, "political subdivision" means a county, municipal corporation, consolidated government, or local authority.

As used in this ordinance, "applicant" means a person applying for a permit for a broadband network project.

As used in this ordinance, "permit" means any local permit, license, certificate approval, registration, or similar form of approval required by policy, administrative rule, regulation, ordinance, or resolution with respect to a broadband network project.

### **(1) Single Point of Contact.**

Ocilla, Georgia shall appoint a single point of contact for all matters related to a broadband network project:

- a) The single point of contact documentation shall include;
  - i. Mayor of the City of Ocilla, GA
  - ii. City of Ocilla, GA
  - iii. (229) 468-5141
  - iv. mayor@cityofocillaga.net
  - v. www.cityofocillaga.net
- b) The single point of contact shall be available for matters related to a broadband network project or a related liaison who may direct such inquiry in real time, with general scope and responsibilities to include permitting and right-of-way; and
- c) The single point of contact information must be current to maintain designation, by updating with such change in contact information on web pages and associated sources, within 15 calendar days of change.

### **(2) Application Completeness Review.**

- a) Ocilla, Georgia shall determine whether an application is incomplete and notify the applicant, by email, of the determination by Ocilla, Georgia within 10 calendar days of receiving an application.
- b) If Ocilla, Georgia does not respond to the applicant on whether the application is incomplete, within 10 calendar days, the application shall be assumed to be complete on the 11th day.

### **(3) Notification of Incomplete Application.**

- a) If Ocilla, Georgia determines that an application is not complete, the notification by email to the applicant shall specify all required components of the submitted application that were considered 'incomplete';
- b) The Ocilla, Georgia's response shall include a checklist of sequenced items that resulted in the application being deemed 'incomplete' and the review timeline shall be as follows:

- i. The applicant has up to 40 calendar days from the date of notification of incompleteness to respond back with corrections; and
- ii. If the applicant does not respond back within 40 calendar days, the application is deemed canceled.
- c) If within 10 calendar days the Ocilla, Georgia does not respond to the applicant on whether the corrected application is incomplete, the application shall be assumed to be complete on the 11th day; and
- d) The City of Ocilla, Georgia shall require a new submission and reset the process and application fees, should an application be deemed incomplete a second time.

**(4) Approval or Denial Notification.**

If, on or before the 11<sup>th</sup> day as described in 2 (b), an application is deemed complete, the City of Ocilla, Georgia shall approve or deny an application within 10 calendar days unless a joint meeting between the applicant and the City of Ocilla, Georgia is deemed as necessary.

- a) If a joint meeting is deemed necessary, the joint meeting must occur within 15 calendars days of notification of completion and the joint meeting shall include:
  - i. Where applicant is going to conduct work,
  - ii. When the work will be conducted,
  - iii. What type of work will be done,
  - iv. Who the City of Ocilla, Georgia can contact for specific details or related questions, and
  - v. Any permit seeking approval under application.
  - vi. Following a joint meeting between the applicant and the City of Ocilla, Georgia, the City of Ocilla, Georgia shall deny or approve the application within 10 calendar days.
- b) Upon final approval, any required permit shall be deemed issued.

**(5) Related Fees.**

- a) Any fee imposed by City of Ocilla, Georgia to review an application, issue a permit, or perform any other activity related to a broadband network project shall be reasonable, cost based, and nondiscriminatory to all applicants.
- b) Any application fee that exceeds \$100.00 shall be considered unreasonable unless City of Ocilla, Georgia can provide documentation justifying such fee based on a specific cost.

**(6) Other Information.**

- a) **Double Fee:** No City or County shall require an application or permit(s) when already approved by an authorized state or federal jurisdiction. Provider shall notify and provide a copy of the approved permit to the single-point-of-contact at the City or County prior to access of right-of-way within the City or County jurisdiction.
- b) **Application Validity Timeline:** Any approved application shall be valid for six months from the date of approval. Should a provider not commence the service request qualified in the approved application within six months, the application shall expire, and it shall require a new permit approval and any associated fees, as applicable.
- c) **Single Service Drop:** A City or County shall not require a permit for a broadband service provider to perform an installation of broadband service at an individual customer's service

address as long as the facility being utilized only transverse a deminimis portion of the public right-of-way to reach the customer's property. The provider must still comply with the provisions of Chapter 9 of Title 25 of the O.C.G.A.

- (7) The City of Ocilla, Georgia acknowledges:
- a) A Georgia Certified Broadband Ready Community has an affirmative duty to notify the Georgia Department of Community Affairs of any changes to the information submitted as part of its application; and
  - b) Failure to notify Georgia Department of Community Affairs of changes may result in revocation of The City of Ocilla, Georgia's Broadband Ready Certification, should the certification be granted.
- (8) This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon adoption by the governing body upon final reading.

PASSED AND SO ORDERED, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Mayor Matt Seale*  
 Mayor  
 City of Ocilla, Georgia

Sixth: Employee Health Insurance Renewal  
 Mayor Matt Seale asked City Clerk Lucile Middlebrooks to review the Employee Health Insurance renewal. She stated that the employee health insurance renewal will increase by 13.81% and considering Covid-19 we did not have a lot of claims and this increase is reasonable. Attorney Warren Mixon stated that since the renewal would be automatic the Council did not need to vote on it.

## Your Renewal Snapshot

Your current medical plan(s) and the renewal plan(s) are reflected in the grid(s) below. A complete listing of benefit details can be found on the Summary of Benefits at [sbc.anthem.com](http://sbc.anthem.com). Or click on the plan name in electronic copies, then enter your renewal effective date into the top box of that page.

Renewal Premium Equivalent Rates for your Medical Plan(s)												
Plan Name/Contract Code	Ded Ind/Fam	OP Max	Office Visit PCP/SPC	Inpatient Hospital	ER/UC	Prescription Drugs	EMP	ESP	ECH	FAM	% of Change	
Current Plan 1 CSP Blue Open Access POS 3250/20%/4750-M01A	\$3250/ \$6500	\$4750/ \$9500	\$30/ \$60	Ded:20%	Ded:\$300/ \$75	Level 1- \$5/ \$20/ \$45/ \$80/ 20% Level 2- \$15/ \$30/ \$55/ \$90/ 20%	\$590.56	\$1181.11	\$1092.53	\$1683.09		
Renewal Plan 1 CSP Blue Open Access POS 3250/20%/4750-575K	\$3250/ \$6500	\$4750/ \$9900	\$30/ \$70	Ded:20%	Ded:\$350/ \$75	\$5/ \$20/ \$50/ \$85/ 20%	\$672.11	\$1344.22	\$1243.40	\$1915.51	13.81%	

Enrolled: 27    2    0    0    Total: 29

Medical Enrolled: 29    Monthly Premium Equivalent Rate: \$20895.41    Medical % of Change: 13.81%

CITY OF OCILLA  
 SP11:  
 GA Chamber SMAI  
 Effective Date: 04/01/2021

Seventh: Frank Road Street Lights  
 Mayor Matt Seale presented a proposal to change out 7 (seven) street lights on Frank Road to LED lights. He has received several requests for better lighting on Frank Road.

Mayor Matt Seale called for a motion.

Motion by Councilman Lemora Moses and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilman Steve Hudson to proceed with changing the 7 (seven) street lights on Frank Road to LED light.

All in favor – Voted 4 yes; Opposes 1 (Councilwoman Patrice Y.M. Manley)

Motion passed.

**Governmental Regulated LED Roadway Lights Authorization**



Customer Legal Name OCILLA CITY OF DBA \_\_\_\_\_  
 Service Address 0 STREET LIGHTS OCILLA GA 31774 County Irwin - GA  
 Mailing Address PO BOX 626 OCILLA GA 31774  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_ Tel # \_\_\_\_\_ Alt Tel # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tax ID# 0000 Business Description \_\_\_\_\_  
 Existing Customer Yes  No  If Yes, the current Account Number? \_\_\_\_\_  
**Note: LED Roadway lights must be set up on a different account**

Selected Components						
Action	Qty	Lumens	M/UM	Type	Description	Estimated Monthly Regulated Charge
INS	7		Unmetered	LED	Roadway@\$10.89	\$76.23

<b>Estimated Total</b>	<b>\$76.23</b>
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Frank Rd upgrades

The estimated monthly regulated charge is based on Georgia Public Service Commissions (PSC) approved tariffs in place at the signing of this document. Customer understands that actual usage and future PSC approved tariff changes could change the estimated total. Customer agrees billing is based upon the number of lights attached to the service point(s).

Customer Authorization	Georgia Power Authorization
Signature:	Signature:
Print Name:	Print Name: Bradley Hooks
Print Title:	Print Title: Sales Engineer
Date:	Date:

Eighth: The Mayor’s Salary  
 Mayor Matt Seale request that this item be moved to the last topic on the agenda.

Ninth: Report from Committees  
 Councilwoman Claire Clayton-Stone announced that there will be a Prater Fest meeting on Thursday, March 11, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

Tenth:

#### The Mayor's Salary

Mayor Matt Seale proposed a salary increase for the Mayor of \$8,400.00 to \$15,000.00 per year. The change must be done in an election year and this would go into effect the next calendar year. According to City Attorney Warren Mixon a public notice must be placed in the Ocilla Star three times before the Council Meeting upon discussing increasing the Mayor's salary. This process has been completed.

Mayor Matt Seale turned the Meeting over to Mayor Pro-tem Lemora Moses. But before leaving the meeting, Mayor Matt Seale moved to the presentation table and read his comments to the Council.

"I have written these comments not in an effort to appeal for your vote in favor of this proposal, but to make sure it is clear what this is about. It is unfortunately not surprising that this proposal has caused the reaction among the public, and among the members of this Council that it has. I challenge anyone to identify an annual expenditure of \$6600 that generated this level of discussion and controversy. In the recent past, we have voted to purchase new pieces of equipment that each cost over \$100K, vehicles in the \$20K and \$30K range, and to fund projects and matching funds for grants that cost us thousands more than this measure, all with little conversation. This one has created quite a bit of conversation, and very little involving me, though much of it is about me. For that reason, I have let our Mayor pro Tem run this portion of the meeting, I am making these comments, and then I will leave to allow the council to discuss and decide this issue without my presence.

In making this decision, however, I think it is important that each of you separate me as an individual from the issue you are deciding. This does not need to be made with Matt Seale in mind. This is a decision about the role and responsibilities of the Mayor of the great City of Ocilla, whoever he or she may be, both now and in the future. I have learned firsthand the expectations of this role, having served in it for 6 years. The demands put on the position are what I would ask you to focus on here. The decision you make today goes beyond me. The last time this issue was addressed was decades ago. So the question I pose to you is this, what kind of options do you want for the Mayor of your City. The demands on the time of whoever fills the role requires more than just a couple meetings a month and stopping in to sign checks and paperwork occasionally. The current salary of \$8400 annually breaks down to \$700/month before taxes. This means that a person filling this role will need to have income from another source in order to have a modest standard of living. So a retired person drawing a pension or social security or a person who already has means of some kind are the only types of people who have the ability to put in the hours to oversee the operations of the city and also work on things to bring new projects and amenities here. If you want to

attract someone in their earning years and expect them to spend considerable time in this role, then this amount has to change.

Let me now address some of the most asked questions that seem to be coming up around this issue.

The question has been raised about the timing of this proposal. That is actually more dictated by state law than anything else. As I explained in the previous meeting, state law requires any change in an elected official's salary to be conducted in a specific manner. It must be done before qualifying for the next election begins (that is this August) and the change, if a voted into action, does not take effect until the beginning of the next term. This means that if you vote to increase the pay of the Mayor, the people have an opportunity to decide who should have that increased pay. It does not start immediately, and if I don't run or if I run and I am defeated, then I never receive anything in addition to what I am paid right now. This proposal was announced at the last meeting but was not brought up for a vote, it was advertised in the paper in advance of the meeting when it would be voted on to encourage transparency and discussion. This issue has served to engage our local paper to pay more attention to City Council meetings, which has been complained about recently. As the City does not have any authority over the Ocilla Star or any of its employees, I'm glad this issue has increased the engagement and coverage of what we do, though I sincerely hope it goes well beyond this issue. While the negativity from some on this issue is not pleasant, I wouldn't have it any other way. For those who may ask, "Why now?" I honestly don't know what the suspicion is but the answer is because it is how the law says this must be handled. I suppose this could have been done in a previous year, like last year when the pandemic, protests, and elections had everyone's attention, but I thought it would be more fair and transparent to do this closer to the time of the election for the office of Mayor.

The issue of where does the money come from has been asked and the question of "Can we afford this?" as well. The money for this comes from the same place that the current salary of the Mayor and Council (and a majority of City employees) comes from: the general fund. This is funded by property taxes, sales taxes, as well as various other fees. There seems to be a concern that this \$6600 increase that will not go into effect until January of 2022 will throw the city's finances into turmoil. Nothing could be further from the truth. I would not suggest a pay increase for anyone, certainly not myself, if it caused any damage or even potential damage to the financial stability of the City I have been elected to lead. That wouldn't be good stewardship. It has also been asked and suggested that this small change in salary would prevent us from doing some of the other things we have discussed implementing as a City. Allow me to discuss some

developments from the past several years that have had a positive impact on our financials. I am not taking sole credit for any of these things, but I have been involved, in some way, with all of them.

- Our enterprise funds are healthier now than they have been in years, perhaps ever before. This is partly due to expansions we have made in our natural gas line to bring on 2 major industrial customers. While the investments cost 10s of thousands of dollars, they are now paying off in increased revenue. We also instituted an annual review of our other utilities charges. We have made incremental changes to the fees and put in place a tiered fee structure to encourage water conservation. Over the past 5 years, we have been able to move the salaries of every member of the public works department to our utilities enterprise funds. When we had 2 separate departments (Streets and Sanitation and Utilities) we had 7 people paid out of the general fund. The merger of the 2 departments into 1 unified Public Works department has created efficiencies in our operations and paying all employees in that department from enterprise funds has taken a financial load off of the general fund.
- The Legislative Policy Council of the Georgia Municipal Association, of which I have served as a member for 5 years, has pushed for fairness in sales taxes, including internet sales taxes. As the owner of a brick and mortar retail store, I know all too well the unfair advantage that an online merchant has if they do not have to charge sales tax for the same item that I might have in my store. This issue has been addressed with House Bills in recent years sponsored by Jay Powell and Bret Harrell, that required sales tax to be collected and paid to the local government where the purchase was made and also required online retailers like Amazon to collect even when they are acting as a facilitator for a third party seller through their site. Those bills were signed into law by Gov. Kemp and the last of them went into effect last April. We now get to collect sales tax when people from Ocilla and Irwin County order online, and as the number of online purchases was growing, this took care of an issue that was causing a decrease in our revenue and turns it into an increase, all while leveling the playing field for small town retail businesses.
- I have discussed with the Council and worked with the County to address a fairness issue with our tax equality between City taxpayers and Unincorporated County taxpayers. You will remember that I asked you to adopt a resolution to implore the County to address the issue and you did so unanimously. I later reported to you that the Irwin County Commission voted to change the LOST split to better favor the City. While this does not in my opinion, completely set the inequality issue right, it was a big step and I was willing to make the compromise since they were willing to meet us part way. The change went into effect this calendar year and the first check with the new split was paid in February.
- The Joint Development Authority that we are a part of along with Irwin County, Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County had a note to finance the Millennium Technology Park. As the current Vice-Chairman of that JDA, I have been involved in the efforts sell off pieces of the property in order to pay down the note more quickly. This



annual payment that we have had to budget for year after year is around \$30K. I am happy to report that at the end of last year, the City wrote a check for around \$27K and that was the last payment on that note.

- Investments in equipment and technology to aid our police department are already starting to pay off. We have installed cameras in strategic locations around the city and more recently added electronic tag readers to strategic locations as people enter the city. This has enhanced our Police Department's ability to protect us and investigate criminal acts, as well as the added benefit of increasing the number of citations issued. I do not want Ocilla to ever be known as a speed trap or an over policed community, but between the fee increases recommended by Judge Pujadas a few years ago, that were long overdue, and the increased ability of our police to identify and cite violators, our revenues have increased. We are way ahead of our budgeted revenue for citations for the current year, and the tag readers have not even been in place for the entire current fiscal year.

The point of these examples is to show that the finances of the city should not be a concern with regard to this proposal. In addition to these examples, we have done 2 annexations in the last 18 months that will have resulted in an increased tax digest and additional utility customers. Not to mention that the revenue we get each year from the 1% IPT has consistently been higher than we budget for. This has been as much as \$15k dollars more than we budget for in some years. We have, and will continue to budget conservatively and always use the previous year's amount in the next year's budget as opposed to expecting a higher number each year, but as people build more homes and have property of increased value that is insured, that will continue to rise as well.

We have discussed bringing new staff on board in recent meetings. I have personally introduced the idea of creating a community development department. We created a separate department in the budget 2 years ago. If not for the Coronavirus pandemic and the uncertainty it caused for our revenues, there would have been a proposal from me to move forward with more funding and discussions of the new job descriptions for this department. This year, with more stability and even increases in revenue as I have already laid out, the time is right. We have the ability to start this with the next budget that we will be discussing soon. This can include staff to work on code enforcement, planning and zoning, permitting, recreation, DDA support, housing and other community development. Obviously that is a lot and not something that will happen all at once, but we are in a position to move forward now, and the proposal regarding the Mayor's salary will not jeopardize any of this. It will not stop or even slow down anything we have discussed. Under normal circumstances, an increase in one thing on the budget would have to result in a decrease somewhere else. That is not the case here as I

have already detailed revenue increases and expense decreases that allow for this and the new efforts we have all discussed.

With this line of questions though, I have to ask, if the Council is excited about all of these potential opportunities to expand what we can do as a City, who do you expect to oversee this additional department with these additional staff members?

In addition to the additions and improvements I am excited to discuss with you all in the next budget planning cycle, I plan to propose a decrease in the millage rate on property taxes as I believe the current rate is an impediment to encouraging property development, especially for business investment. This would have been visited last year, but the uncertainty of our revenue as a result for the pandemic made it necessary to wait.

There has been talk over the years and again recently about a city manager for Ocilla. I believe that at some point we should have a city manager. The move will require a change in our city charter to adopt a new structure, making the Mayor's role smaller and allowing the new position to handle the day to day operations of all departments. However, the idea of doing that now as opposed to providing more to the Mayor while he or she is acting in the city manager role does not make fiscal sense at this time. Traditionally, a city manager is the highest paid employee in the city. For Ocilla, we would have to reasonably offer around \$75K (minimum) plus benefits to get a qualified and experienced person to come fill that position. If anyone is seriously concerned about or financial status for a small increase in the Mayor's role, then this is clearly out of the question. As I have laid out in the financials, we could do that in the near term, but we would be doing that instead of investing in specific community development roles that I have already listed, and that I believe are high priorities for several of you. I suggest that the best course of action would be to focus on creating more now for an eventual city manager to be responsible for.

All that I have laid out so far is about where the city's finances are and the need for the increase for the position of Mayor, and separate of me personally. Let me speak for myself now. As I have pointed out, the increase cannot, by law, take effect until the election this year has occurred and the winner of that election to take office next January. This may beg the question, "Is Matt Seale going to run for Mayor?" People want to know if this proposal might be self-serving in any way.... I could easily give you a nice political answer, like "I haven't decided yet" or "I'm considering my options" or some other vague answer. But I believe in being as transparent as I can be. As I sit here now, I intend to run for Mayor later this year.

While I suppose something could change, the decision by the Council about the salary will not factor in to it. However, the Council's decision will inform me and direct my path, as well as the decisions of others who may consider this position in the future. Do the members Ocilla City Council, and the people they are influenced by who put them in office, value the roles and responsibilities of the office of the Mayor of the City of Ocilla? Do they see the work that is asked of that person, and want to support a proactive person in the role? Do you value the leadership that is asked of whoever is your Mayor? Or do you think there should not be much to the job and will leave the salary to reflect that?

I have no problem looking at each of you and saying the work I have done each year has been worth far more than the money currently paid. It is also worth more than what the increase would be. I am not suggesting that the position be paid what it actually required, and even if this proposal passes, whoever the Mayor is will be making sacrifices to try to manage and improve our community. This measure would just make the sacrifice a little less and allow for future candidates that might be held back from even considering serving because of economic circumstances. The signal sent tonight will be a powerful one.

At this time, I will be glad to take any questions that can only be answered by me before I leave the room to let the Council discuss and decide this issue."

He completed his comments with any questions.  
No one asked questions so he excused himself from the room.

Mayor Pro-tem Lemora Moses stated that the discussion would be just the Council members. Councilwoman Claire Clayton-Stone spoke first, then Councilwoman Patrice Y.W. Manley, Councilwoman Mona Paulk, Councilman Lemora Moses, and Councilman Steven Hudson. After allowing some comments from the public, Mayor Pro-tem Lemora Moses called for a motion.

Motion by Councilwoman Patrice Y.W. Manley to leave the Mayor's salary the same at the \$8,400.00 annual salary. Motion died for lack of second.

Mayor Pro-tem Lemora Moses called for a motion again.  
Motion by Councilwoman Mona Paulk and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilwoman Claire Clayton-Stone to increase the Mayor's annual salary from \$8,400.00 to \$15,000.00 to begin the next calendar year.  
All in favor – Voted 3 yes (Councilwoman Mona Paulk, Councilman Steven Hudson, and Councilwoman Claire Clayton-Stone);  
Opposes 1 (Councilwoman Patrice Y.W. Manley) Motion passed.  
Councilman Lemora Moses did not vote, because he was acting Mayor.

Eleventh: Mayor Pro-tem Lemora Moses called for a motion to adjourn.  
Motion by Councilwoman Mona Paulk and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilwoman Steven Hudson  
to adjourn the meeting.  
All in favor – Voted 5 yes; Opposes None – Motion passed.

MEETING ADJOURNED:

MAYOR MATT SEALE

CITY CLERK LUCILE MIDDLEBROOKS