

Town of Triana Regular Council Meeting
Monday, November 13, 2023
6:30PM

Mayor called the meeting to order. The clerk called the roll:

Councilmember George Ragland-Present
Councilmember Erica Hopkins – Present
Councilmember Jason Garstka – Present
Councilmember Levoneia Ayers – Present
Councilmember Casey Whitman – Present
Mayor Mary Caudle -Present

Members present constituted a quorum.

Legal Council Caleb Ballew and the clerk Sharron Humphrey were also present.

Motion by Councilmember Whitman to approve the minutes dated October 23, 2023. Councilmember Garstka second the motion. Motion carried.

Mayor Caudle's Report: Progress is moving along with the Fire Station; we will need to pass an Ordinance. She stated we are applying for an interest loan with the bank. We will pay the interest on the loan until the fire station has been built. USDA will then pay the loan in full. The town will then purchase bonds through USDA. If everything goes well and we have the audit completed by the 15th we will close on loan Friday.

Mayor stated the council had expressed an interest in dividing the town into districts instead of having places. Councilman Whitman reached out to the company that did divided Madison into districts. She has a call with them, she stated she asked Councilman Whitman to sit in on the call being that he's Chair pro Tempore. The call will be with Slaughter & Associates on Wednesday at 3:30 she stated anyone that would like to be on the call to let her know. She stated the call will be to talk about the steps to go thru, the cost and how long it may take.

Councilman Ragland asked how many districts it would be. Mayor stated the same number as places. She will make her report at the next council meeting.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

Fire & Police: Chairperson Ragland reported the Fire Dept. responded to 1 outside fire, 1 structure fire, 3 fire alarms, 7 emergency calls 12 total.

Police Dept. traveled 2,779 miles, made 38 traffic stops, 37 warning citations, 6 traffic citations, 41 calls for service, 4 arrests and 10 reports.

Finance: Chairperson Hopkins reminded committee of the finance work session on Thursday, Nov. 16th at 5:45.

Utility: Chairperson Whitman reported sewer project upgrade continuing to go well, they have done their second drawdown.

on Business. Certain areas will be in a larger tax bracket. He stated the municipal code tracks the way the taxes are collected in the state code. The state general code is 4%, this is implemented by the County.

He stated there are 16 counties in Alabama that allow for a 5% tax. Madison County is one of those. That is in addition to any municipal tax. Places like Huntsville and Madison are paying those taxes pursuant to the state levy and local tax levy. This is collected monthly unless a business or entity applies for a certain exemption if you paid less than \$2400 in taxes on the lodging tax in the previous year. Most people in Triana would qualify for that exemption. They would have to apply for it. He recommends the town have at least one or two public meetings about it. He stated unlike a state tax there does not have to be certain vote by the public. This is for any business or establishment renting for less than 180 days.

Attorney Ballew stated if council has more questions on the tax, they can get with him later them. Mayor stated to the public that the town we're discussing taxing Airbnb's.

Councilmember Ragland apologized to the Sanderson family, Doughty family and the Grays family. He stated he was asked about the water meter fees and he informed them that the deposit was \$150, and the hookup fee was \$2600.

He stated when they came down to the office to pay, they were told a higher amount. He did not know at the time fees had increased at the time.

He stated they asked him about a private contractor coming in to set the water meter. He informed them that they would have to go through the town and that there is no certain time once they are placed on the list.

Mayor added that it is hard to get meters, many places have meters on back order. We are all trying to get meters in. She stated some of the contractors are also upset because we have not been able to set meters for them. We can't make the supplier supply meters any quicker. That's the hold up.

Councilmember Whitman stated they need to have a public hearing on the Minimum Habitability Ordinance to let the public come out and give final input. Public Hearing scheduled for Nov. 27th at 5:30pm.

Public Comments:

Eric Ingram, a resident of Brook Haven Subdivision stated he is in support of the Habitability Ordinance.

Hector Bones, a resident of Brook Haven Subdivision stated he is in support of the Habitability Ordinance.

Valerie Anderson stated she just wants to know when her water meter will be set.

Mayor stated the problem is getting the meters in.

Ms. Anderson asked could she buy a meter and have someone else put in. Mayor stated no she cannot.

Kimberly Doughty expressed her concern that she was given two different prices for meter installation. Mayor stated our rates have been the same for over a year.

Mayor stated the town does not make any money on the meter sets. She stated we contract with Madison Utilities to do our work.