

September 8, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Leonard Tartt with prayer and salute to the flag. In attendance: Tartt, Lewis, Westmark, and Edwards.

A **motion** to approve the August 11, 2025, minutes was made by Lewis, seconded by Westmark, 3/0.

Anthony Stephens addressed the Council. He is interested in renting the SHS auditorium for a family-based music event, every month, or every other month, beginning February 13/14, 2026. A film crew would be onsite, to showcase Sopchoppy way of life. City Clerk, Ashley Schilling, will send Mr. Stephens a draft fee schedule.

Kevin Warren with James Moore and Company presented the results of the 2023/24 audit and financial statement. The audit produced no findings or recommendations. The general fund has a carried forward balance of \$1,026,417. The water fund has a carried forward balance of \$12,907,500.

Vice Mayor Edwards arrived during the audit presentation.

Ameris Bank, represented by Shana Langston, Jennifer Reese, and Patrick Murphy presented a proposal of Ameris' treasury services to the Council. A review of seven of the City's accounts, creating an analysis billing structure (hybrid) and two money markets would earn 4.11%: a proposed earnings net of \$11,645/month. The Council would like a comparison of Ameris and Capital City before deciding where to place the city's funds.

Betsy Rudden, Depot Park Wildflower Committee, stated the committee will be moving some small trees by the end of the year and looking for structures to move the vines to. PWD Green proposed 16' cattle panels for that purpose. Ms. Rudden also said, if the city is willing to accept, someone wants to donate a wooden arbor with a swing attached, and they would like to put it facing the pond between two pines. A **motion** to accept the donation of the arbor was made by Edwards, seconded by Westmark, 4/0.

Councilwoman Westmark would like to meet with PWD Green, Maintenance Tech Henderson and Lynn Artz, Thursday, Sept 11 at depot park to decide where to place the proposed cattle panels. Westmark will report back at October meeting.

The Council held the **2nd Public Hearing and Adoption for Ordinance 2025-02** - An Ordinance To Adopt The Operating Budgets For The General Fund Of The City Of Sopchoppy And The Water Fund Of The City Of Sopchoppy. To Provide A Reasonable Anticipated Revenue And Expenditure Schedule For The 2025-2026 Operating Year. The ordinance was read by title only by Mayor Tartt. A motion to adopt the ordinance was made by Edwards, seconded by Westmark, 4/0.

City Clerk Schilling presented **Resolution 2025-04** to the Council - A Resolution Of The City Council Of The City Of Sopchoppy, Florida Adopting Its Amended Personnel Policy. The resolution amended the overtime/compensatory time portion. Non-exempt employees can accumulate up to 20 hours of comp time each fiscal year or opt to be paid each month. Exempt

employees can carry up to 240 hours of comp during their tenure with the City; however, they will not be paid for it at any time. Special comp for working on the 4th of July must be used before the next 4th of July or lose it, no pay out. A **motion** to adopt the resolution as presented was made by Edwards, seconded by Westmark, 4/0.

The financials and adjustments were approved by signature of the Council.

PWD Green reported the following: he is still working on the value engineering of Well 7, meeting with Trevor Burch regarding the Trice Lane upgrade, Wildwood Drive line upgrade is complete and cleared by DEP, SEH submitted a RIF Grant and inquired about legislative budget requests.

PWD Green also received a quote to tear down and remove the SHS library (\$13,0000 and gym (\$90,000). Given the price of tearing down the gym, Green suggested using the building for equipment storage, cutting bay doors into the front. Green also suggested subdividing the library from the rest of the city property and sell it. Attorney Cox told CC Schilling to place the library on the October agenda for discussion.

Vice Mayor Edwards told Green to meet with David Edwards and Somer Pell and request an exception to the county's landscape ordinance for the Well 7 site; or go to the County Commission with the request.

Green reported a citizen brought Councilman McClendon a proposal for exclusive rights to the historic gym. This person would market it as a venue, raise the rental fee, and give the City an agreed upon price (stated \$1,000) each time the facility is rented. This person would need to present the proposal to the full Council for consideration.

Clerk Schilling asked about the Sr. Citizen lease of the annex. Edwards stated the Sr. Center Board did not approve the lease as presented. The Board inquired what the City would agree to if the center only utilized the current space. Debbie Van Horn would like to explore other options. Edwards will also follow up with Center staff to ensure all utilities have been switched over.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m. Motion by Lewis, seconded by Edwards, 4/0.