

North Augusta



South Carolina's Riverfront

MINUTES OF APRIL 20, 2020

Robert A. Pettit, Mayor

*J. Robert Brooks, Councilmember
Pat C. Carpenter, Councilmember
Fletcher L. Dickert, Councilmember
David W. McGhee, Councilmember
Eric H. Presnell, Councilmember
Kevin W. Toole, Councilmember*

ORDER OF BUSINESS

VIRTUAL STUDY SESSION

The virtual study session for the City Council meeting of the City of North Augusta of April 20, 2020, having been duly publicized, was called to order by Mayor Pettit at 6:00 p.m. using GoToMeeting online conferencing software and streamed online for public viewing at the City Facebook page: "City of North Augusta – Public Information" and City YouTube page: "City of North Augusta Public Information" and adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Per Section 30-4-80(e) notice of the meetings by email was sent out to the current maintained "Agenda Mailout" list consisting of news media outlets and individuals or companies requesting notification. Notice of the meetings was also posted on the outside doors of the Municipal Center, the main bulletin board of the Municipal Center located on the first floor, and the City of North Augusta website.

Members present were Mayor Pettit, Councilmembers Brooks, Carpenter, Dickert, McGhee, Presnell, and Toole.

Also in attendance were Rachelle Moody, Interim City Administrator; Kelly F. Zier, City Attorney; Cammie T. Hayes, Director of Finance and General Services; Thomas C. Zeaser, Director of Engineering and Public Works; Ricky Jones, Manager of Information Technology and Sharon Lamar, City Clerk. The members of the public and the media were provide access to the meeting via video live-streaming.

ITEM 1. CITY COUNCIL AGENDA: Items on the April 20, 2020 Council Agenda- Council Discussion

Interim City Administrator, Rachele Moody, led Council's discussion of the April 20, 2020 meeting agenda. Tom Zeaser, Director of Engineering and Public Works, answered questions about the location of the Lynnhurst Drainage Improvement Project in Resolution 2020-15 and the planned scope of the project.

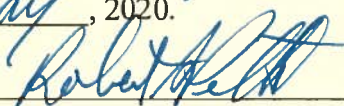
ITEM 2. FINANCE: Status of Utility Charges and Taxes Issued by the City of North Augusta – Council Update

Rachele Moody, Interim City Administrator, shared with Council the status of utility charges and taxes issued by the City. Comparisons were made between the first quarter of 2019 and the first quarter of 2020. Cammie Hayes, Director of Finance and General Services, assisted in answering Council's questions, as well. Councilmember Carpenter asked if payment information is available at the front of the Municipal Center so that citizens know how they can make their payments since the building is currently closed to the public. Ms. Moody stated the information is posted near the front doors – citizens may deposit their payments in the drive-up drop box in the parking lot, may mail their payment, or may use the City's website on-line payment portal. There was a consensus of Council to support some type "hardship" program for citizens who may be struggling financially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Hayes explained that the City already had such program in place. Ms. Moody added the City staff is working internally to prepare for assistance. Councilmember Carpenter stated the City must consider the payment history of customers. Councilmember Brooks supports extending the tax payment deadline. Kelly Zier, City Attorney, cautioned the City should seek the advice of Bond counsel to ensure the allowance of reduction of fees, etc.


Please see ATTACHMENT #2 for the notes shared by Ms. Moody.

APPROVED THIS 4 DAY OF

May, 2020.


Robert A. Pettit, Mayor

Respectfully submitted,


Sharon Lamar
City Clerk

ATTACHMENT #2

Status of Taxes, Fees and Utility Payments for the City of North Augusta

I. Utility Payments

- Payments made for actual water and wastewater consumption by customer and standard recycling, sanitation, stormwater and street light service provided to customer
- No change in utility payment due dates required by City (rolling billing cycles)
- Per governor's executive order, City will not shut off utilities for non-payment during current state of emergency
- If customers do not pay utility bill on time, the standard \$7 late fee is charged

Utility payment data (as of 4/17/20):

3/25/19 billing	3/25/20 billing	Difference
5,432 bills	5,505 bills	73 more bills
1,009 past due	1,410 unpaid (Due 4/20)	401 potential increase in past due
157 disconnect list		

3/11/19 billing	3/10/20 billing	Difference
7,213 bills	7,339 bills	126 more bills
959 past due	1,157 past due	198 more bills past due
115 disconnect list	524 still late (would have been disconnected)	409 increase in disconnect list

Notes:

- Total amount currently past due by customers: \$71,340
- Total customers at risk for service interruption 829
- Average 900 courtesy calls for late bills each cycle each month
- Average 250-300 on disconnect list 1 to 2 days prior to cutoff
- Average disconnect list 175 customers
- 2020 budgeted delinquent fees total \$277,000

II. Property Tax Payments

- Payments made on real and personal property owned by customer
- No change in property tax payment due dates required by City (due date is May 1)
- If customers do not pay on time, the standard 15% penalty plus delinquent statement fee will be charged

by 3/31/19 General Fund	by 3/31/20 General Fund	Difference
24% collection rate	35% collection rate	11% higher to date in 2020

Notes:

- Taxes currently being collected are for the 2019 tax year
- Large mortgage company tax remittances already received for 2020
- Average 1,200 delinquent property tax notices annually.
- Average penalties collected annually total \$67,000
- Properties with unpaid taxes may be sold at tax sale in November; customers have six months to remit payment and penalty before possible tax sale

Status of Taxes, Fees and Utility Payments for the City of North Augusta

III. Accommodations Tax Payments

- Payments submitted by hotels and other places of accommodation to City based on 3% tax paid by customers for their accommodations charge (pass-through payment)
- No change in accommodations tax payment due date (due date is the 20th of the month)
- If remitters do not pay on time, the standard 5% per month penalty will be charged

February Tax 2019	February Tax 2020	Difference
# remitters 16	# remitters 17	1
# late 0	# late 0	0

Note: If payment is remitted to City on time, a 2% discount on the tax due is applied

IV. Hospitality Tax Payments

- Payments submitted by prepared food providers to City based on taxes paid by customers for food/drink purchased (pass-through payment)
- No change in hospitality tax payment due date (due date is the 20th of the month)
- If remitters do not pay on time, the standard 5% per month penalty will be charged

February Tax 2019	February Tax 2020	Difference
# remitters 107	# remitters 95	(12)
# late 5	# late 1	(4)

Note: If payment is remitted to City on time, a 2% discount on the tax due is applied