



Chris Jenkins, *Director*
Justin Messer, *Assistant Director*
PUBLIC WORKS DIVISION

Cemetery Department
Jody Gonzales, *Superintendent*

Engineering Services
Aaron Carroll, *Director*

Public Works Vehicle Maintenance Department
Joe Krinke, *Superintendent*

Solid Waste Collections Department
Tim Garrett, *Director*

Solid Waste Processing & Disposal Department
Lee Stone, *Director*

Streets & Drainage Department
Chad Hampton, *Director*

PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSIT COMMITTEE
AND
TRAFFIC COMMISSION

March 8, 2023, 2023 10:00 AM.
Sam King Room - 601 Broad Street

PRESENT: Commissioner Beeman, Chair
Commissioner Collins
Commissioner Bojo
Ms. Kelly Parker, Executive Assistant to the City Manager
Mr. Chris Jenkins, Public Works Director
Ms. Toni Rhinehart, Finance Director
Ms. Kathy Shealy, Transit Director
Ms. Courtney Williams, Transit Assistant Director
Mr. Artegas Newell, Planning Director
Maj. Chris Dehart, Rome Police Department
Capt. Danny Story, Rome Police Department
Mr. Doug Walker, Public Information Officer
Mr. Artegas Newell, Planning Director
Ms. Julie Harris, Parking Service Manager
Ms. Julie Smith, Transportation Planner
Ms. Aundi Lesley, DDA Director
Ms. Megan Otwell, Downtown Special Events Coordinator

GUESTS: Mr. Luis Goya, Rome High Soccer Coach
Mr. Edwin Baeza, Soccer Event Organizer
Mr. Dewayne Comer, EXP
Mr. Ryan Higgins. EXP

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Beeman called the meeting to order.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Bojo moved to approve the minutes of the February meeting. Commissioner Collins seconded. The motion carried.

POLICE REPORTS

Major Dehart introduced Captain Danny Story who has recently been promoted over traffic and will be replacing Major Dehart at this meeting going forward.

Major Dehart presented the February Accident/DUI report. He noted there were 195 accidents for the month up from 175 at this time last year. Year-to-date, accidents were down slightly from 369 last year to 360. Being a commuter town, accidents occur mostly between Monday and Friday. The highest accident intersection was Broad St. at 2nd Avenue with 7 accidents. Shorter Ave at Burnett Ferry Rd. was second with 6 accidents, and Turner McCall Blvd/Hicks Dr/Riverbend Dr was third with 4 accidents.

TRANSIT OPERATIONS

Transit Updates

Ms. Shealy reported that ridership continues to be steady and stable. They are currently working on technology for the new buses. Ms. Griffin added there are several large projects to update the information technology systems for all modes we operate. We are currently evaluating several RFPs to determine what would be the best fit for the department's needs. She added she will attend a micro transit focus group next week. She noted they have decided to combine their software and feasibility study into one RFP to ensure their bid package will match all their needs.

Commissioner Collins asked if there were any grants that could apply to these projects. Ms. Shealy said they are requesting four electric vans. GDOT has provided about \$190,000 towards our grant for the ITS system. Ms. Griffin explained this system will allow unscheduled stops along the route through an auto-dispatch system. Commissioner Collins asked if we could go to Georgia Highlands with this system. Ms. Griffin said it could, being a city-based program that could include the County. She added a micro transit route could be more efficient while we work to build up ridership to Georgia Highlands before we commit to a fixed route.

Commissioner Beeman asked if a park-and-ride has been considered. Ms. Griffin said it's a good idea, but our station is currently in a paid parking lot and we would have to find a location that is suitable. She added that the feasibility study will give us a lot of good information to help us better identify the community's needs.

Commissioner Beeman asked how ridership to Georgia Highlands would be built up. Ms. Griffin said the President is excited about a partnership with the RTD and ridership should naturally increase as we show a presence. Initially, she believes a micro transit service would be more efficient than a fixed route and would save us from having to restructure our current services. This type service will also enable us to better study our ridership and traffic flow. She added the software is flexible and we would be able to change the service area parameters. Commissioner Collins expressed concern that we do not compete with local transportation services. Ms. Griffin replied that we don't wish to hurt local businesses but rather to provide additional services and more choices for our riders at varying price points and travel times.

Financial Report

Ms. Rhinehart presented the January financial report. She noted there is still no revenue for main line since we are offering free ridership. There was a transfer from the general fund and some interest income. On the expense section, she noted we have a negative cash balance of \$316,000 due to the purchases of new buses as well as the delay in operating reimbursements. She reported that we have sold all the Tripper buses at this time. We are now waiting for clarification on how we can utilize the proceeds of those sales. They are currently in a restricted account.

OLD BUSINESS

Riverbend Drive

Mr. Carroll reported an additional speed sign was installed on Riverbend Drive facing 2nd Avenue that has been up for three weeks now. It was run in stealth mode for the first two weeks. Data retrieved showed only 1.9% of the traffic coming from that direction is exceeding the speed limit by 10 mph or more. Coming from the IHOP direction, traffic, is exceeding the speed limit by 7%. The sign was put into operation last Wednesday so next month he will be able to report any changes in driver behavior.

NEW BUSINESS

Request to Close a Portion of the Levy/Trail

Mr. Luis Goya, soccer coach for Rome High and Mr. Edwin Baeza, Soccer Event Promoter presented a request to close a portion of the Levy/Trail across from Barron Stadium during a professional soccer championship. Last year they brought the Guatemalan national team to Barron Stadium and the event was extremely successful. The only problem they experiences over 300 people watching the event from the levy causing many safety concerns. This year they are bringing the Guatemalan national team against the top Mexican team. Around 8,000 people are expected. The event will take place on Sunday, March 26, 2023. The closure is requested from 4 PM until 8 PM and they will hire officers to monitor the area.

Commissioner Collins asked Major Dehart if he recommended the closure. Major Dehart said he felt it would be safer and he recommended the closure.

Commissioner Collins moved to approve the request. Commissioner Bojo seconded. The motion carried.

Request to Close a Portion of Park Court

Mr. Carroll reported on a request from Dovetail Civil Design Inc., on behalf of the developer, for a partial closure of the cul-de-sac of Parks Court. This street was the rear employee entrance to the former AT&T facility, and it is not in use. They are building several town houses on this property. He noted that all petitions are in order and he recommended approving the request.

Commissioner Collins moved to approve the request. Commissioner Bojo seconded. The motion carried.

Request to Close a Portion of Spider Webb Drive for Juneteenth Celebration Saturday June 17, from 9 AM to 7 PM

Mr. Jenkins reported the NAACP has requested to close a portion of Spider Webb Drive for the Juneteenth Celebration. He noted this closure was approved last year and there were no problems reported. He added the event will use a portion of the school property in the field as well. The closure will be from 9 AM until 7 PM. Mr. Jenkins recommended approving the request.

Commissioner Bojo moved to approve the request. Commissioner Collins seconded. The motion carried.

Street Closures for DDA Events

Ms. Megan Otwell presented the DDA events for May 6th and October 14th which will be the 100 to 400 blocks of Broad Street for ROFLO Fest and Fiddlin' Fest from 4 PM until 11 PM. For the First Friday concerts, the closures will be from 6 am until 10 pm beginning on June 2nd through September 1st with Mitchell Plaza being closed for vendors.

Commissioner Collins moved to approve the closures. Commissioner Bojo seconded. Motion carried.

Ledbetter Interchange

Mr. Carroll reported on the 2023 Enhancement Project. He noted that last year we painted all the mast arms poles and put new signal heads up on Broad Street and this year we will focus on the Ledbetter Interchange. He noted that all the sodium halo bulbs have been replaced with LED and we will open bids on March 16th to get all the poles in the interchange painted the same green as those downtown. We also request new guardrail

which will be bid out in June. This will make the entry into Rome much nicer. Mr. Jenkins noted that Mr. Carroll has done a great job to get this done. Georgia Power had quoted \$1.5 million to convert all the lighting. Mr. Carroll came up with an alternative way to do this for less than \$150,000.

Riverside Pkwy

Mr. Jenkins reported that Mr. Comer, formerly of GDOT came last year to discuss the intersection of Riverside Pkwy at Chatillon. He is here today to give more information on that project. He noted is in the top five in accident volume this month. Mr. Comer presented an aerial view of the intersection and indicated his proposed changes to improve safety and traffic flow. He noted that GDOT has awarded the City \$1.4 Million of HB170 funds to apply to this project. Mr. Comer recommended dual through lanes on Riverside and Braves Blvd. to reduce the congestion and empty the lanes faster. Mr. Jenkin added that GDOT will pay for the construction portion of the project with the \$1.4 million but we will have to cover the design. GDOT has given approval, so we only need permission to move forward with the design.

Commissioner Bojo moved to approve the request and Commissioner Beeman seconded. The motion carried.

OTHER

Photobooth

Ms. Leslie presented photos of the photobooth awarded to DDA at their state conference's silent auction. She noted this is temporary, and we would like to place it on the push out on the 200 block of Broad Street. It will be a small revenue stream for DDA. It is maintained by a third party who manages the film and the revenue. It's totally free to maintain. The third party will collect the money and will pay DDA. The only work involved will be for the Street Department to install it. Major Dehart asked if there would be cash money collected in the booth. She said it only takes credit or debit cards.

Commissioner Bojo moved to install the photobooth. Commissioner Beeman seconded. The motion carried.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Margaret Hollingsworth

Margaret W. Hollingsworth, Secretary.