



**CITY OF LITHONIA  
MINUTES–SPECIAL CALLED VIRTUAL MEETING  
COPS Grant Award  
Thursday, February 3, 2022 @ 5:00 PM**

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**I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

The Special Called Meeting was called to order at 5:03 pm by Mayor Shameka S. Reynolds. A roll call was taken, and the following City Council Members were present: Darold Honore, Diane Howard, Amelia Inman, and Yolanda Sheppard. City Accountant Keesha McGurn was on the call. Vanerriah Wynn joined during the discussion.

**II. Approval of Agenda**

Councilwoman Inman motioned to approve the agenda, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Howard and approved by a vote of 4-0.

**III. Discussion**

**a. COPS Grant Award**

Mayor Reynolds acknowledged the City of Lithonia citizens on the call and the purpose of the special called meeting to vote on the COPS Grant Award, and asked council if they needed to ask any questions prior to the vote.

*Council Response:*

Councilwoman Howard in summary to bring out some points regarding the information received. Looked over the application thanked City Clerk, City Administrator, blount, sands, and pollard, 2020 crime report summary 17 officers, the 2021 crime report summary was subsequently provided as well. 22 officers were utilized in 2021, have access to officers without getting into a situation to borrow money for a payback grant, our accountant gave us the green light for the first year with uncertainty during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year, additionally the 8 officers are to be on our payroll for an additional year once the grant ends. That's her concern. Other documents state that submitted to the government there are 2.5 officers per 1,000 residents for a total of 6 officers needed. We can benefit from using the reserves without getting in a bind, would like to see detectors used to check speed limits.

Councilwoman Inman requested that the numbers are read for the community and would like to solicit opinions from 2-3 people in the community. Chief Pollard indicated the total award is \$1,103,011; \$827,258 provided by the federal government, and \$275,752 for the city's obligation, with increments of repayment: first year at \$68,938, the second year at \$93,066.64, and \$113,748.11 for the final year.

Ric Dodd (resident) stated the city for a long period of time has been operating with a single officer, especially at night, calls have not been answered in a timely manner, officers injured in domestic violence situations, would greatly help to have 2 officers on duty at night if there are arrests. Dekalb county police officers want to come to City of Lithonia, police department is doing its job. The city should take advantage of this opportunity.

Sharon Inman (20-year resident) biggest concern either way it has to be paid back, would feel more comfortable if the city has grown, and annexation had passed. As a homeowner

and taxpayer, the money needs to be paid back, we're still under a pandemic, it will affect our taxes either way. There must be other strategic ways.

Councilwoman Inman stated that she is divided and where will the repayment come from, taking a risk, open to hear other perspective and real strategies. In favor of hiring 1-2 officers in existing budget.

Councilwoman Sheppard stressed a few things, annexation though not approved would play a factor proactively, the city has no grants or loans that are in default or past due, this is another opportunity to show our citizens that we are forward thinking and are taking chances to benefit our city, more officers are needed in place for soaring crime, let's take a chance on something meaningful.

Councilwoman Wynn all things considered, this is a high risk, good that we were able to get the grant, it would be good to have a backup plan in writing with steps to be taken.

Councilman Honore sat down with Chief and Major, reviewed plans for the officers, the biggest concern is the increase of payroll, health, and liability insurance, and maintaining these items for an additional year once the 3-year period ends, city in past years has rolled back the millage rate which could be affected by increase. Historically a reserve officer always assisted one police officer, crime has not been a huge issue, feels the scheduling can be tweaked if another person is added on. Police Department is doing a good job.

Councilwoman Inman had one more comment that after listening to everyone she feels more confident in her decision. Financial confidence and other variables such as repayment, and mortgage play a factor. Would like to see a good strategy to work with what we have, hire 2 officers within the next 3 months, scheduling, etc.

Councilwoman Howard stated there are some unexpected financial occurrences, you never know what can happen and money needs to be paid out, money needs to be set aside for a rainy day, does not want to see over policing, does not want to see the city overburdened by fines and tickets.

Mayor Reynolds asked for a motion to approve or deny the COPS Grant.

Councilman Honore motioned to deny the COPS Grant, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Howard and approved by a vote of 4-0. Councilwoman Sheppard was opposed.

#### **IV. Executive Session**

Councilman Honore motioned to enter into executive session for litigation at 5:52 pm, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Howard, and approved by a vote of 5-0.

All Councilmembers were present for executive session except for Councilwoman Wynn. City Administrator Sands and Mayor Reynolds were present, in addition to the City Attorney.

#### **V. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:17 pm.