Mayor Garrett called the Regular Meeting of the Decatur City Commission to order at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, March 2, 2020.

PRESENT: Mayor Garrett, Mayor pro tem Powers; and Commissioners Dusenbury, Mayer and Walsh; and, City Manager Arnold.

MINUTES of the Regular Meeting of February 24, 2020 were approved on a motion by Mayor pro tem Powers; second by Commissioner Dusenbury; and, all voting “aye.”

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE LICENSES.

City Manager Arnold presented an alcoholic beverage license application for retail sale for consumption on premises of beer and wine to Shane Mixon for Emory Village Concepts, LLC dba Paolino, 350 Mead Road, Suites E & F.

On a motion by Commissioner Walsh, second by Mayor pro tem Powers; and, all voting “aye,” the alcoholic beverage license application was approved as recommended.

Special Events Coordinator Jacqueline Moore recommended approval of temporary special event beer and wine licenses for the retail sale of beer and wine at the following 2020 events sponsored by Decatur non-profit organizations: Truckin’ Tuesdays, West Ponce Music Stroll, and the Decatur Beer Festival.

On a motion by Commissioner Dusenbury, second by Commissioner Mayer; and, all voting “aye,” the temporary special event beer and wine licenses were approved as recommended.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ACTION ITEMS.

Mayor Garrett opened the meeting for public comment.

Hearing no comments, Mayor Garrett closed the public comment period.

2020 U.S. CENSUS RESOLUTION.

City Manager Arnold recommended the adoption of Resolution R-20-05 supporting the 2020 U.S. Census by committing to: (1) Partner with the U.S. Census Bureau and the State of Georgia and form a Local Complete Count Committee seeking to Support the goals and ideals for the 2020 Census and will disseminate 2020 Census information; and, (2) Encourage all residents to participate in events and initiatives that will raise the overall awareness of the 2020 Census and increase participation; and, (3) Achieve a complete and accurate count of all persons within our borders.
City Manager Arnold recognized City Clerk Meredith Roark for her work and for collaboration with staff and residents on this initiative.

City Manager Arnold also recognized the official City of Decatur Complete Count Committee members: Gary Garrett, Jodi Cobb, Janet Grant, Stephanie Ezust, Holly Grimes, Sara Yurman, Linda Grant, Thomas Grant, Sarah Jones, Olivia Burrell-Jackson, Ed Lee, Lee Ann Harvey and Renae Madison.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, City Manager Arnold encouraged everyone to remind friends and family to participate in the important event.

Mayor Garrett stated that City of Decatur Complete Count Committee would have a presence at upcoming events and meetings to increase awareness of the 2020 Census.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Powers; second by Commissioner Walsh; and, all voting “aye,” R-20-05 was adopted.

**TAX BILLING ORDINANCE.**

Finance Director Russ Madison recommended adoption of Ordinance O-20-01 establishing 2020 property tax billing dates and establishing the process for assessing penalties and interest rates for unpaid property taxes.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, Mr. Madison stated that the same interest on taxes was applicable to all cities and counties in the state.

City Manager Arnold concurred with Mr. Madison and added that the interest rate was defined by the state. She stated that in the past, local jurisdictions had the authority to pass an ordinance defining the interest rates.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, Mr. Madison stated that staff accepted phone calls regarding the exemption amounts for residents.

In response to a question from City Manager Arnold, Mr. Madison stated that information regarding the general homestead exemption could be found online.

In response to a question from Commissioner Walsh, Mr. Madison clarified that the City was the only municipality in DeKalb County to bill and collect its own property taxes.

In response to a question from Commissioner Mayer, Mr. Madison stated that there were no significant changes to the 2020 billing ordinance from the 2019 billing ordinance.

Mayor Garrett explained the reason to adopt the billing ordinance annually.

In response to a question from City Manager Arnold, Mr. Madison stated that there was an impact on revenues due to the changes in the penalty and interest rates. He stated that he was reassured by the amount of payments that had already been received on time. He added that there
were several opportunities to pay taxes owed before a property was finalized to be listed for a tax sale.

In response to a question from Commissioner Walsh, Mr. Madison stated that payments were also accepted using credit cards or PayPal.

City Manager Arnold stated that the 2020 tax rates and property values remained the same as the 2019 amounts.

In response to a question from Mayor pro tem Powers, Mr. Madison spoke about the tax deferral program and reverse mortgages.

Mr. Madison thanked the City Commission for reviewing and entertaining Ordinance O-20-01 sooner than in previous years as the bills could be prepared in a more timely fashion to meet the April 1st mailing deadline.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Powers; second by Commissioner Mayer; and, all voting “aye,” Ordinance O-20-01 was adopted.

2020 SANITATION FEE SCHEDULE

Assistant City Manager David Junger recommended adoption of the proposed sanitation fee schedule for 2020. He recommended that the single-family residential fee be increased from $290 per unit to $300 per unit, based on the cost to deliver residential sanitation and recycling services. He stated that the material recovery facility currently processing the City’s recyclables had indicated that a $60 per ton tipping fee would be implemented in the near future. Mr. Junger added that the tipping fee would increase the annual expenditures by $120,000. He stated that glass recycling would continue to be collected separately and would not be impacted by the challenges with commingled materials. He stated that the total estimated revenue from residential fees would be $2,312,190.

Mr. Junger recommended that the commercial refuse container cubic yard charge remain unchanged at $4.25 per cubic yard. He also recommended that the charge for collection of 95-gallon carts remain at $800 for one cart once per week and the charge for collection of 3 cubic yard containers remain at $1,200 for one cart serviced once per week.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, Mr. Junger stated that local government entities did not have the authority to implement local ordinances regarding the usage of single-use plastic items. He emphasized the importance of raising awareness and educating the residents to create a change in user behavior.

Mayor Garrett thanked the staff for continuing to provide recycling services when several other municipalities were choosing to opt out.

In response to a question from Commissioner Walsh, Mr. Junger explained the change in commercial sanitation service costs.
City Manager Arnold stated that residents who were eligible for the S2 exemption would not pay a sanitation fee at all.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Powers, second by Commissioner Dusenbury; and, all voting “aye,” the 2020 Sanitation Fee Schedule was approved as recommended.

REQUESTS AND PETITIONS.
DeKalb Juvenile Court Chief Judge Vincent Crawford invited everyone to the DeKalb County Children, Youth and Young Adult Summit on March 21, 2020 at St. Phillip AME Church from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS.
Mayor Garrett read the Zoning Board of Appeals agenda for March 9, 2020.

Planning Director Angela Threadgill presented an update on the 2020 Strategic Plan.

In response to a question from Commissioner Walsh, Ms. Threadgill explained the next steps after the end of phase I of the strategic planning process.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dusenbury, Ms. Threadgill stated that there would be opportunities for shorter interactions in the future, however, online engagement opportunities would be limited.

Mayor Garrett expressed her enthusiasm about the 2020 Strategic Plan Community Academies.

City Manager Arnold invited everyone to the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra at Agnes Scott College on March 8, 2020 from 4:00-6:00 p.m.

City Manager Arnold presented an update regarding the City’s response to the threat of coronavirus COVID-19.

Commissioner Mayer thanked the organizers and volunteers of the 2020 Oakhurst Wine Crawl.

Commissioner Mayer thanked everyone for a great meeting.

Commissioner Dusenbury thanked Mr. Junger and his staff for their work towards making environmentally sustainable choices with regard to the presentation on the 2020 sanitation fee schedule.

Commissioner Dusenbury appreciated Mr. Madison for his presentation on the 2020 tax billing ordinance. He expressed an interest to learn more about reverse mortgages.

Commissioner Dusenbury thanked City Manager Arnold for the update regarding City’s incident response plan.
Commissioner Dusenbury stated that he enjoyed the Black History Month program organized by the Decatur Business Association on February 25, 2020.

Commissioner Walsh reminded everyone that advanced voting for the Georgia State Presidential Primary Election began on March 2, 2020.

Commissioner Walsh congratulated the Decatur High School track team for placing second in relay associated with the Olympic Marathon Trials activities.

Commissioner Walsh commended the work done by Ms. Threadgill and her team towards the 2020 Strategic Plan.

Commissioner Walsh reminded residents to review their eligibility to apply for the homestead exemption.

Mayor pro tem Powers thanked local author Nicki Salcedo and Fire Chief Toni Washington for their presentation at the Black History Month program.

Mayor pro tem Powers shared his experience at the Glenwood Elementary School’s Black History Month program.

Mayor pro tem Powers encouraged everyone to participate in the Tour Decatur Pi Day on March 14, 2020 at 8:30 a.m.

Mayor Garrett thanked Ms. Threadgill for her presentation.

Mayor Garrett thanked Communications Manager Renae Madison and her team for their assistance with the Decatur Business Association’s Black History Month program.

Mayor Garrett requested Mr. Junger to share the neighborhood clean-up dates and paper shredding events to the residents using different channels.

Mayor Garrett shared that she would be attending the Congressional City Conference organized by the National League of Cities in Washington DC.

Mayor Garrett stated that the filming for an episode of “This Old House,” would be taking place in the City. She congratulated Alair Homes for presenting the chosen site for the filming.

The City Commission commended the partnership between staff and the City Schools of Decatur on the successful installation of the Talley Street intersection signal and Scott Boulevard Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.
Meredith Roark
City Clerk