

The Lyerly Town Council held a phone conference call meeting on Tuesday, May 12, 2020 at Lyerly Town Hall. Those on the call were:

Jim Ferguson, Mayor  
Phil Brooks  
Juanita Baker  
Shirley Davis  
Jim Gilliland

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Mayor Ferguson called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Mayor Ferguson said the reason for this meeting is to discuss the packet that the council received about the playground equipment. He said that this has been an important topic for Juanita Baker so he wanted to know what she thinks about it first. Juanita Baker asked what kind of mulch we will be using. Mayor Ferguson said that we will be using pea gravel. Juanita Baker said that someone will fall on the gravel and get hurt. Mayor Ferguson said that pea gravel is what is on the playground now. He added that as long as it is deep enough and the pea gravel is small enough, it will be fine. Juanita Baker then asked what kind of metal is made out of. Mayor Ferguson said that he knows that it is made out of steel but he isn't sure what kind. Juanita Baker said that she just doesn't want it to bend. She added that she sees that it will fit together with what we have now. Phil Brooks said that they make a rubber base to put under the playground equipment but he doesn't see a problem with the pea gravel. It will be easier to maintain. Mayor Ferguson said that he looked into the rubber base and for one, it is very costly and secondly, because it isn't as heavy as the pea gravel, it's harder to keep where you want it. We can get the pea gravel cheaper and locally. Jim Gilliland said that number one, the rubber is too expensive. Shirley Davis said Amen. Jim Gilliland said number two, he used to live close to where this company (Game Time) is and what they do is farmed out to them from Orlando. They will want three grand to deliver it. We are talking about one hundred grand. He said that he bets that we don't have 200 kids that live in Lyerly. Mayor Ferguson said that we are not talking about one hundred grand. Shirley Davis said that she thought we were talking about \$60,000. Mayor Ferguson said that it's \$78,000. We got a \$25,000 grant from Tillotson. Shirley Davis asked what that will bring the cost down to. Mayor Ferguson said that will make it \$53,000. Shirley Davis then asked the Mayor with the economy the way that it is, does he think that we can afford to waste that amount of money. Juanita Baker said that it won't be wasted. Shirley Davis said that kids can't play on it until they are released to. Mayor Ferguson said that the park is open. Phil Brooks said that he has seen kids there all week. Shirley Davis said that she was just thinking that with economy the way that it is and the virus, we may need that money to keep the town going. Mayor Ferguson said that we haven't had any financial impact from any of this. Jim Gilliland asked what the grant was for. Mayor Ferguson said that it was a grant for playground equipment. Jim Gilliland said that personally he still thinks that it is too much. He is against it and will vote against it but it's up to the rest of the council. Mayor Ferguson asked Jim Gilliland why he would vote against it. Jim Gilliland said that he doesn't think it's worth that much. Mayor Ferguson asked how much he thinks that it is worth. Jim Gilliland said that he doesn't know but he doesn't think that it's worth that much. Mayor Ferguson said that he needs a number from Jim Gilliland on what he is

comfortable with spending on playground equipment. Jim Gilliland said whatever the grant is for. Mayor Ferguson said that we can't get any good playground equipment for \$25,000. Jim Gilliland said that we will just have to get what we can get for \$25,000. He said that this is nice and pretty but he bets that there aren't 150 kids in Lyerly. We aren't doing this for people in Oak Hill, Holland or Chattoogaville, this is for Lyerly. Mayor Ferguson said that it is for everyone that uses our park. Phil Brooks agreed. Jim Gilliland asked Mayor Ferguson if he wants to answer to the tax payers about spending their tax dollars to put with this grant for whoever uses the park, no matter whom or where they are from. He said that he doesn't agree with that at all. Phil Brooks said that he does agree with it and he thinks that we have done a hell of a job in the park and as long as we have the money, we should go ahead with it. Shirley Davis said that she thought when we agreed on this that we weren't going to spend but \$60,000 and that we were only going to buy one piece. Phil Brooks said that it is a unit. Shirley Davis said that she thought we were adding one piece to the slide and stuff that is already there. She didn't know that we were going to go in and tear all that stuff out and put all new stuff. Juanita Baker said that we aren't tearing anything out. Shirley Davis asked where we are going to put all this stuff its showing. Mayor Ferguson said that there is a diagram showing where it will go. Shirley Davis said that she is going to go along with Jim Gilliland on this. Juanita Baker said that 20 years ago when the civic club got the equipment that was up there before, they got up \$20,000 and Woodman matched it and they bought all of the benches, tables, had the pavilion built and everything and that was \$20,000 twenty years ago. She said that if we can get this for \$53,000, she thinks that we need to get it. Shirley Davis said that this isn't the time for us to be putting that much money out there for something that isn't helping the people of Lyerly. She would rather have a code enforcer than to put that much on playground equipment. Juanita Baker asked if we would have any trouble making the payments. Mayor Ferguson said that there won't be any payments, it will be SPLOST funds. We already have the money. Jim Gilliland said that he doesn't agree to spend the money. Mayor Ferguson asked Jim Gilliland what he thinks that the money needs to be spent on. Jim Gilliland said that he would like to see a camera system put around the town so we can see what is going on. And just because we have money doesn't mean that we have to spend money. Shirley Davis said that she'd like for the money to go toward a code enforcer to help clean up the town. Jim Gilliland said that he agrees with that. Shirley Davis added that this town is starting to look like a dump because people aren't taking care of things. Mayor Ferguson said that we can't pay a code enforcer out of SPLOST. Phil Brooks said that he is looking for the future and what is best for the kids. Shirley Davis said that she isn't against the kids or anything like that. Phil Brooks said that he knows that and knows that Shirley's heart is as good as gold. Phil Brooks added that he is going to make a motion to accept this but it isn't to be against Shirley Davis and Jim Gilliland. It is because he thinks that this is what we need to do. He added that he does agree that this Corona virus is a terrible thing and something that we all have to fear. Shirley Davis said that she doesn't fear the virus as much as the depression that we are going to have. Phil Brooks said that he agrees but he is hoping that this will give a place for families to take their kids and have a good time. Phil Brooks made a motion to accept the quote for playground equipment and go ahead with the purchase. Juanita Baker seconded. Jim Gilliland and Shirley Davis voted no. Mayor Ferguson said that makes it a tie. He said that it doesn't hurt his feeling if they vote yes or no but he does want to point out one thing; he doesn't know everything. So if they disagree with the way that something is going, that is fine but it would be really helpful if they had specific suggestions about which way we can go. Shirley Davis said that she has asked fifty times for the Ragland building to be painted. Mayor Ferguson said that there is no point to painting it until we fix the entire thing. Shirley Davis said that it is a huge eye sore right in the middle of town. Jim Gilliland said

that he has a suggestion. He said that we should table this until they can get together face to face and discuss it and maybe look into it a little more. He said that he hasn't had a chance to look into it but he doesn't see that much money floating around. Shirley Davis said that it is a good idea and a good thing and if our economy was real strong and we weren't going through this virus it would be different but we have to pay for the sewage down there and other stuff. Mayor Ferguson said that the money has already been acquired for the sewer pond project. Shirley Davis said that we will have to pay it back. Mayor Ferguson said that we do but it is in the budget. Shirley Davis then added that there are sewer charges on the water bills and we don't even attempt to pay off that debt so people's water bills won't be so high. Jim Gilliland said he has people coming to him complaining about city taxes. He doesn't want them to think that even though we got a grant, well, most people in Lyerly won't even understand a grant. Juanita Baker said that is their fault. People are more than welcome to come to our meetings and see what is going on in town. Shirley Davis said that no one cares because they don't ever come. She said that she agrees with Jim Gilliland that we should table it. She then asked the mayor if it had to be voted on tonight. Mayor Ferguson said that it isn't the end of the world. Shirley Davis said that if Mayor Ferguson wants to be the tie breaker, he can. Mayor Ferguson said that he will have to look and see what happens when there is a tie. He can't remember precisely. Jim Gilliland said that the mayor can vote against a tie. Mayor Ferguson said that it is fine if they would like to set this aside and think about it for a little bit. Shirley Davis asked how long we have to use the grant. Mayor Ferguson said that we have to use the grant money before the end of the year and if we don't use it, we have to give it back. Shirley Davis said that until we see if the economy is going to get better and if we will have a depression or not we shouldn't put that much money into something. It will look bad if people can't afford to buy food but we can afford to spend \$50,000 on a piece of equipment. Jim Gilliland said that he would like for a few of the council to go over to Game Time and try to work out a deal with them. Juanita Baker said that playground equipment in Dowdy Park cost over \$100,000. Shirley Davis said that they have a bigger budget than we do. Jim Gilliland said that there are about 6,000 people in Summerville and there are about 400 or 500 in Lyerly. Juanita Baker said that is true but we are going to let any child that comes through Lyerly and wants to play to come and play. Jim Gilliland said that we could charge the parents of every kid that comes to play a tax. He said that makes about as much sense as what you are saying. Mayor Ferguson said that if they are in the town spending money, they are paying taxes. Phil Brooks said that if they spend money in the county they are too. Jim Gilliland said that Lyerly doesn't get much of it. Shirley Davis asked if we take the \$25,000 and the money from SPLOST, then nothing will come out of the city's budget. Mayor Ferguson said that is correct. Shirley Davis then asked if we won't be getting into the money that pays the bills. Mayor Ferguson said no. Phil Brooks said that is why he voted for it. Mayor Ferguson said that he would not have brought this forward if we were taking \$53,000 from the town's budget. Jim Gilliland asked if this is the most important thing that we could use that money for. Phil Brooks said yes. Mayor Ferguson said that at the moment there isn't anything pressing. Shirley Davis said that they need to table this until about July and things will either be straightened out or gone bonkers. Jim Gilliland said that he agrees with that. Juanita Baker said that is fine with her. Jim Gilliland said that he doesn't see the rush. The money will still be there. Phil Brooks said that you can't ever tell with our county government. Jim Gilliland said that if we need it for something else then we need it for something else. Phil Brooks said that it won't be for us. Jim Gilliland asked Phil Brooks to explain what he means. Phil Brooks said that if the commissioner decides that he needs our funds for something else, he could easily take ours back. Jim Gilliland said that he doesn't agree with that. Phil Brooks said that he has seen stranger things. Jim Gilliland says that if everyone agrees, then we should table it until July.

Juanita Baker asked Phil Brooks if he is ok with that. Phil Brooks said that he is going to stay with the way that he voted but if they want to wait until July, it's fine. Mayor Ferguson said that it is up to the council. He said that he was just told that we need playground equipment and he was trying to make it happen. In the meantime, he said that he will get some prices from other vendors. He said that he hated to go to somewhere where no one local will benefit in anyway. It was decided to wait until July. Mayor Ferguson asked if the council would like for him to look at some companies that are further away. Jim Gilliland said that the company he got the quote from isn't really nearby even though they are in Fort Payne. They are going to charge \$3,000 for delivery so yes, he can check around.

Juanita Baker asked if they will have a meeting next month. Mayor Ferguson said that is up to the council. He has just been keeping them safe from him. If they are ok with coming in person, then we will do that.

Shirley Davis asked about the new truck. Mayor Ferguson said that the factory has been shut down so it will be a while longer.

Jim Gilliland asked how the security is doing. Mayor Ferguson said that they have been doing a good job. They have confronted several people walking around late at night. He knows of one that turned into an arrest. Jim Gilliland asked how much we are paying them. Mayor Ferguson said we pay them \$20 per hour.

Shirley Davis made a motion to adjourn. Jim Gilliland seconded. All in favor.  
Meeting was adjourned at 7:27pm.

Phil Brooks said that he would like to have a meeting in person next time. Everyone agreed.

Juanita Baker thanked Mayor Ferguson for all that he has done as far as the playground equipment. She has been begging for this for years and what we have is pretty bad up there. She added that she understands that they paid \$15,000 for the little piece that is up there and she doesn't think that \$53,000 plus the grant for what he wants to get is a bad deal. It is a lot more equipment. Mayor Ferguson said that he is just trying to do what they all discussed when they took over a few years ago.

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Mayor

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Town Clerk