The Lyerly Town Council met for their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, March 20, 2018 at Lyerly Town Hall. Those in attendance were:

Jim Ferguson, Mayor

Gwen Fisher

Phil Brooks

Juanita Baker

Shirley Davis

March 20, 2018

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ferguson at 7:00 pm.

***New Business:***

*Approval of FY18 Amended Budget –* Mayor Ferguson said that we talked about the budget last month and there were a few things that needed to be changed. He said that the changes are highlighted on the copies the council has. The fire protection increased and along with that, the fire departments budget increased to reflect it. Also, the travel and lodging from where the mayor and council had to go to Athens increased also. He said that he added unemployment payments for John Jones which totals $2,016. It is $144 for sixteen weeks. Phil Brooks made a motion to approve the amended FY18 budget. Juanita Baker seconded. All in favor.

### Gwen Fisher asked if we have found anything to help with the cost of the expensive water/sewer equipment we need. Mayor Ferguson said that he is meeting with the [Appalachian](https://www.arc.gov/)Regional Commission next week about possible grants for that. He said that he is also going to see if they have funding to help refurbish the Ragland building.

*Resolution for IGA –* Mayor Ferguson said that Commissioner Winters wants us to pass a resolution committing to participation in the TSPLOST. Commissioner Winters wants to add a penny to the sales tax for Transportation Special Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST). It would be for transportation related things and it would be in addition to SPLOST. Based on the SPLOST, it would give us around $300,000 over the course of five years. We could use it for sidewalks, drainage, improving roadways, curbs, gutters, etc. Mayor Ferguson added that if the council adopts this resolution, they would be agreeing that he could enter into negations about the distribution of funds with Commissioner Winters and we will participate if it passes. Juanita Baker said that the good thing about it is that everyone would have to pay it, not just property owners. Mayor Ferguson said that Commissioner Winters is hoping to have it on the November ballot. Jimmy Espy asked if the Resolution is in support of the increase. Mayor Ferguson said that the Resolution is that we agree to participate if it passes. He added that all of the municipalities in the county have to agree to participate or Commissioner Winters can’t have it on the ballot. So Commissioner Winters wanted a Resolution from each municipality that states that they agree to be involved. Phil Brooks made a motion to adopt the IGA Resolution. Gwen Fisher seconded. All in favor.

*New Security Guard –* Mayor Ferguson said that we have a new security guard. His name is Billy Norton, Jr. He said that he has been doing a great job so far. He works late at night.

*Ag Rate for Water –* Mayor Ferguson said that he has been approached by someone with chicken houses about offering an agricultural rate for water. The county has an agricultural rate for farmers and people with chicken houses. He said that we can’t afford to go as low as the county but by his math, we could knock off 25¢ per thousand gallons on their water, however, that 25¢would be about $7,000 per year. Gwen Fisher said that she would be opposed to it. Shirley Davis said that she would also be opposed. She believes that if they make money off of the chickens, they should be able to pay the rate we charge everyone else. Mayor Ferguson said that he understands that but they do use a lot more water than the average customer. Juanita Baker said that her daughter is on county water and she receives the agricultural rate for her garden and farm so she understands. Mayor Ferguson said that he could run the numbers from last year and get some better figures, if the council wants to revisit the subject later.

*Ethics Ordinance –* Mayor Ferguson said that it is the same one that was adopted in 2010. It is up for renewal, if we would like to remain a GMA City of Ethics. Phil Brooks said that he isn’t against it but why. Mayor Ferguson said that it is just a commitment that we won’t be crooks. Phil Brooks stated that they agreed to that when they took the Oath of office. Shirley Davis said that if something happens and we have this ordinance, it would make thing simpler. Phil Brooks said that he just doesn’t understand why we are being so redundant. Mayor Ferguson said that this is a product of other municipalities in the state who have had officials prosecuted. Gwen Fisher said that there are people who get on the council to profit from it. Town Clerk Sally Kerce said that it is mostly just being recognized by GMA as a certified City of Ethics. Phil Brooks said that he would sign it; he just wondered why you have to agree to do something over and over. Phil Brooks made a motion to re-adopt the Ethics Ordinance. Shirley Davis seconded. All in favor.

Mayor Ferguson opened the floor to the public at 7:18pm.

Shirley Davis said that the Easter egg hunt is planned for the 31st at 1pm and that she thinks that everything is taken care of. Sally Kerce said that it will be in the paper this week and next. Gwen Fisher said that she may plant some pansies in the park for color. Shirley Davis said that she and Gwen will provide the prize for whoever finds the golden egg. Each egg will have candy in them. Mayor Ferguson and Phil Brooks donated $10 each to fill eggs with $1 bills.

Fire Chief Ronnie Stephens said that they received the air packs that they ordered. They charged them up, tested them and they work great. They are on the trucks, in service. We got five packs for $10,644.16. That includes freight also. He added that he and Mayor Ferguson had talked briefly about Purple Heart City and he has gotten some paperwork together. Trion, Summerville and Chattooga County are all Purple Heart. He said that there is a procedure that you go through, that involves a proclamation. It is pretty much recognizing veterans and their sacrifice. There is no cost involved, other than the signs.

Shirley Davis asked Chief Stephens if our fire protection is up to a level to help with insurance. Chief Stephens said that we are a 5. The rating are 1-10, 10 being nothing and 1 is the best. He added that we may want to get Insurance Services Organization (ISO) to come back since we have upgraded the water system because we got the 5 before that was done. Shirley Davis was just wondering if our rating helped people get discounts on their insurance. Chief Stephens said yes. The higher the number, the higher your insurance will be. Our rating is right in the middle so it does help.

Phil Brooks made a motion for Mayor Ferguson to proceed with Purple Heart City. Gwen Fisher seconded. All in favor.

Juanita Baker asked if we have purchased new flags for our veteran’s crosses. Sally Kerce said that she has not ordered them yet. She said that they need to decide what size they want. Chief Stephens said that he could get some prices from the American Legion.

Phil Brooks said that the Pentecostal Church on Lyerly Dam Road asked him about putting a sign at the Ragland building to show where they are located. He said that he told them they would need to attend a meeting. Mayor Ferguson said that they could attend a meeting and explain exactly what they are wanting.

Phil Brooks made the motion to adjourn. Juanita Baker seconded. All in favor.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:41 pm.

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 Mayor Town Clerk