

**MINUTES – CALLED MEETING
CITY OF CAMILLA, GEORGIA
JANUARY 3, 2023**

The Called Meeting of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Camilla was called to order at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 3, 2023 by Mayor Owens.

Present at roll call: Councilmember Tucker, Councilman Burley, Councilman Morgan (via phone), Councilman Collins, Councilman Pollard, and Councilman Palmer.

City Manager Stroud and Clerk Ford were also present.

OPENING PRAYER AND PLEDGE

Councilman Pollard gave the invocation and the Mayor and Council led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

CITIZENS AND GUESTS

Sign-In Sheet Attached.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion by Councilman Pollard, seconded by Councilman Burley, the motion to approve the Called Meeting agenda for January 3, 2023 passed by a unanimous vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – REAL ESTATE ACQUISITION

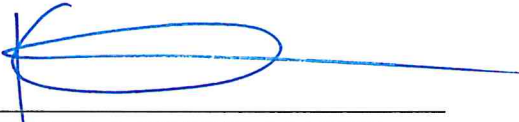
A motion was made by Councilman Morgan and seconded by Councilman Pollard to go into executive session to discuss a real estate acquisition. The motion passed by a 5-1 vote with Councilman Palmer voting no. The Mayor announced after executive session any action related to the real estate acquisition would be public. .

Upon adjournment of executive session a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign a purchase agreement for property known as the Blue Anchor building for purchase price of \$239,000 and \$2,000 of earnest money with a fourteen day due diligence period was made by Councilman Burley and seconded by Councilman Pollard. Councilmember Tucker commented she is supportive of economic development in the community and groups that work on economic development. She is concerned about taking property off the tax roll and the City will be reducing its' digest by taking off property they were receiving tax on. If they are going to purchase the property and not charge market rate for rent, they are subsidizing for someone to be in that location. She assumes the plan would be for a restaurant and there are other hard working restaurant owners in the city limits without government assistance or subsidies. She commented for the City not to do this and to encourage the three development authorities to continue to work on attracting someone to operate a business there. Assuming the vote goes through, they are making it clear it will be used as a restaurant and not a bar or nightclub. Councilman Palmer stated this is one of the worst business decisions he has ever heard of a city making. The City's

development authority is to purchase buildings that need new businesses or renovations and encourage business owners, not the City of Camilla. The building has been for sale over two years at a large price. This is a very poor decision and he will be voting no. Mayor Owens made comments about inflation, absence of private investments, the Blue Anchor and other buildings downtown being vacant for years. It is prudent, in his opinion, for the government to act. It is not unusual in the absence of private investment for the government to come in and stimulate the economy. Most people are used to the federal and state levels doing that. They are going to have to start investing in themselves. It has been a year, for the most part, that the DDA has been reconstituted in its current form and probably explains why many of the buildings are vacant, because the DDA did not act. He knows this is different and unorthodox but is the world they are living in today. At some point they have to stop waiting for things to happen and take action. Councilman Palmer stated citizens need to know if this proposal goes through the City will be subsidizing the person who goes in the building and other competitive businesses in town should be listening. They are going to be subsidizing a business with city taxpayer money. After further comments by the Mayor and members of Council, voting in favor of the motion via a rollcall vote to authorize the Mayor to sign a purchase agreement for property known as the Blue Anchor building for purchase price of \$239,000 and \$2,000 of earnest money with a fourteen day due diligence period: Councilmen Burley, Morgan, and Pollard. Voting in opposition: Councilmember Tucker and Councilmen Collins and Palmer. The Mayor voted yes and the motion passed by a 4-3 vote.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Councilman Pollard and second by Councilman Burley, the meeting adjourned.

BY: 
KELVIN M. OWENS, MAYOR

ATTEST: 
CHERYL FORD, CLERK