



MINUTES
Cochran City Council
Tuesday, February 14, 2023
Regular Scheduled Meeting @ 7:00 PM

City Auditorium, 102 N Second Street, Cochran, GA 31014

Present: Mayor Billy Yeomans

Councilmembers: Gary Ates, Keith Anderson, Jimmy Jones, Andrew Lemmon, Carla Coley, Rufus Veal,

City Attorney: Jim Elliott

Call to order by Mayor Billy Yeomans @ 7:00PM

The invocation was given by Councilmember Ates and the Pledge led by Councilmember Coley.

Mayor asked for any corrections, additions or deletions to the February 14, 2023, agenda. Councilmember Jones made the motion to add Item #12 to the agenda, Item #12 Consider approving the revised retreat agenda with a second by Councilmember Ates.

Motion passed 6/0.

Mayor called for a motion to accept the February 14, 2023, agenda with changes. Councilmember Ates made the motion to accept the February 14 agenda with changes with a second by Councilmember Lemmon. Motion passed 6/0

Mayor asked if there were any corrections or questions to the January 10, 2022, minutes. Councilmember Ates made the motion to approve the 1/10/23 minutes with Councilmember Veal seconding. Motion passed 6/0

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- I. Call to Order by the Mayor**
 - II. Invocation**
 - III. Pledge of Allegiance**
 - IV. Attendance**
 - V. Adopt Agenda**

VI. Agenda Items

ITEM #1- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Proclamation for National Black History Month. Mayor Yeomans called several ladies in attendance to the front to stand with him while he read the Black History month proclamation.

ITEM #2- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Presentation of Safety & Liability Grant Award from GMA Representative Artiffany Stanley. Artiffany Stanley, Members Service Consultant, presented the City with a check in the amount of \$7,700 grant award for participating in the ongoing GMA Safety & Liability Program. She encouraged the city to apply for the grant each year. City Clerk, Tracy B Jones, City Manager, Richard Newbern, Fire Chief Brock Wilcher, Police Chief Jeff Trawick, Public Works Director Willie Farrow stood with Artiffany Stanley to pose for a picture of the presentation.

ITEM #3- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Consideration of Health Insurance services and premiums from Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield – Shaw Hankins Brokers. Johnathan Shaw made a presentation to Council regarding the city's insurance premium for health, dental and vision for the new year. Councilmember Jones made the motion to approve to renew the agreement with health insurance services through blue cross and blue shield with Jonathan Shaw with a second by councilmember Ates. Motion passed 6/0.

At this time, Councilmember Veal made a motion to go into executive session with a second by Councilmember Coley. The City Attorney stated the motion must include purpose – Discussion of pending or potential litigation, settlement, or claims. O.C.G.A 50-14-2. Motion passed. 6/0

Mayor asked the audience to exit the room @7:16PM.

Meeting back to regular session @ 7:42PM.

Councilmember Veal made a motion to postpone Items # 4,5 & 6 on the February 14, 2023 agenda pending further investigation with a second by councilmember Coley. Motion passed 6/0.

ITEM #4- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Consider CDBG application and time for Public Hearing POSTPONED

ITEM #5- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Consider engaging the services of Dependable Home Inspections to assist with preparation of the CDBG Housing grant application POSTPONED

ITEM #6- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Consider approving the financing of the required lead abatement costs at Susan Lord's house on Rose Street using ARPA funds POSTPONED

ITEM #7- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Consider directing the City Attorney to pursue action to address the double taxation of Cochran citizens to fund the Bleckley County fire service, including steps to create a fire tax district for unincorporated Bleckley County. The City Attorney explained double taxation of the citizens of Cochran; the language in the statute HB 489 to address citizens of a municipality paying for services from a county they are not receiving. He felt that was the intent being made. Mayor stated this was just giving the authority for the Attorney to start the paperwork on this issue. Councilmember Jones made the motion to authorize the city attorney to move forward with the steps to create a fire tax district for unincorporated Bleckley County with a second by Councilmember Anderson. Motion passes 6/0

ITEM #8- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Consider filing an AFG Fire Equipment Grant and a SAFER Personnel Grant to FEMA for equipment and personnel for the Fire Department. Fire Chief Brock Wilcher asked the Council for permission to continue with the grants that are available. Two grants are being pursued currently. AFG grant will help fund a new fire engine to replace Engine 12. This grant has a 5% match and a 3% to the grant writer. The SAFER grant pays for 3 years of three (3) fire fighters positions 100% with no match. 3% to grant writer. Councilmember Anderson made the motion to consider the AFG and the SAFER grant with a second by Councilmember Jones. Motion passed 6/0

ITEM #9- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Consider award of bid for tree purchases for the Ga. Tree Council's RELEAF Program. Bids were opened February 8. Only two bids were submitted for this project. Wagon Hammock and Dixie Landscaping both will be awarded the bid. The larger trees will be placed all over the city and the little trees will be "given away" to residents who wish to plant trees on their property. One tree per eligible residents. This giveaway will take place in March. Dates will be published when decided. Councilmember Ates made the motion to approve the bid to award the tree purchases for the GA Tree Council RELEAF Program with a second by Councilmember Lemmon. Motion passed 6/0.

ITEM #10- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Consider setting a date in late April 2023 for Cochran Clean-up Day and Scrap Tire Amnesty Week. The council was asked to consider setting Saturday, April 22 as Clean Up day and the week of April 16-22 as scrap tire amnesty week. Councilmember Coley made the motion to approve the dates of Clean-up day and Scrap Tire Amnesty Day and also approve staff to file a Scrap Tire Grant application with GA EPD with a second by Councilmember Veal. Motion passed 6/0.

ITEM #11- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Consider the appointment of new City director to Recreation Department Mayor Yeomans stated the Recreation department has nominated Bianca McBurse for the new city recreation broad appointee. Councilmember Ates made the motion to approve the nomination with a second by councilmember Veal. Motion passed 6/0.

ITEM #12- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Consider approving the 2023 Retreat Agenda. Councilmember Jones made a motion to approve the revised retreat agenda with a second by councilmember Ates. Motion passed 6/0

City Manager – Spoke about the Planning Commission meeting in Greensboro.

City Attorney – Reminded Mayor and Council to sign affidavit for closed session.

Council Discussion Items:

District 1

Anderson – Thanked the city for the flowers and prayer during the lose of his grandmother. He also thanked Councilmember Ates, Mayor, Richard and all citizens who attended the district one meeting. Happy Valentine’s to everyone.

Ates – Enjoyed the District one meeting. Try to meet the Monday before the Council meeting.

District 2

Coley – Announced Dre Day & NAACP Youth Clean Up Day 10AM-12AM February 18th. NAACP Youth Leadership will have a Black History Program at Mt Zion at 2PM. February 28th.

Veal – GA Signs called and asked him about the sign for Cochran citizen Mimbs, 2 time national championship winner with GA Bulldogs. Also, EK Hall, great asset to the city. Working on something to honor his name.

District 3

Jones – None

Lemmon – None

Mayor Comments

DDA 2:15 Investigation – Two members who resigned attended and two didn’t. Will get with attorney to see how to subpoena the two that didn’t show up. Retreat is an open meeting unless closed meeting is required.

Thanked the City employees for all the hard work they do.

Public Comments (Please note that every individual who signs up to speak prior to the meeting will be given a total of 3 minutes to address the Mayor and Council.)

Mary Pitts: 110 Palm Street – Asked Mr. Newbern, if anyone has checked on the abandoned house on the corner of Ash and Beech? Have reached out to owner and pending demolition according to Mr. Newbern.

She recommended the pickle ball course to go at the recreation department.

Mayor adjourned the meeting @ 8:15pm.

(SEAL)

Tracy B Jones
City Clerk