



MINUTES
Cochran City Council
Thursday, February 23, 2017
Special Called Meeting @ 7:00 PM

City Hall located at 112 West Dykes Street, Cochran, GA 31014

Present: Mayor Gary Ates, Mayor Pro Tem Andrew Lemmon, Councilmembers Regina Gooch, Jon Thrower, and Fleming Gilman.

Absent: Councilmember Charles Cranford

Call to order by Mayor Ates. The invocation was given by Mayor Ates followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilmember Thrower.

Mayor Pro Tem Lemmon made a motion and Councilmember Thrower seconded the motion to approve the Agenda. Motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor.

Agenda Items

Item # 1 – Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Consider an Ordinance regarding cell tower and wireless communication poles in the City of Cochran. City Manager, Richard Newbern, presented an ordinance prepared by City Attorney, Leo Phillips. This ordinance would regulate the location of cell towers and wireless communication poles in the City right-of-ways. At this time the City of Cochran has no ordinance to address any type of wireless communication poles or towers. The ordinance sets forth the requirements pertaining to any company who wishes to make application for locating such equipment in a City right-of-way. Applicants must provide a description of business use for such equipment, the proposed location, a construction schedule, and must pay all permit fees. The City has been approached by a company named Mobility who is planning to put a 123-foot wireless pole in the right-of-way in the area of South 6th Street and Peacock Street. The company has placed a 30-day notice in the paper for information and historical resources. Mr. Newbern presented a second ordinance which provides for a rate schedule for permit fees for locating this type of equipment in a City right-of-way. Included in the ordinance is a Schedule A which sets permit fees at \$1,500 per year for a new pole location and \$750.00 annual fee for Co-Locator attachments to existing poles. Each permit fee for wireless communication poles or their Co-Locator attachments will be subject to a 5% annual escalator. Councilmember Gilman asked if this ordinance would regulate height of towers or poles. Mr. Newbern stated that it would not, however, the FAA would be the regulatory agency for that. Police Chief Chris Coley added that Council should consider zoning requirements for such communication towers and/or poles. Councilmember Thrower made a motion and Councilmember Gooch seconded the motion to approve the ordinance regulating the location of wireless communication towers and poles in the City right-of-ways. The motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor. Mayor Pro Tem Lemmon made a motion and Councilmember

Gooch seconded the motion to approve the ordinance which sets a fee schedule for permits to locate wireless communication towers and/or pole and the accompanying Schedule A which sets the fee to \$1500 per year for a new pole location permit and \$750 per year for a Co-Locator attachment permit and the 5% annual escalator. The motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor.

Item #2 – Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Consider City appointment to the Heart of Georgia Regional Commission Board. Appointee will be a voting board member. Monthly meetings are normally held in Mount Vernon, Ga. Mr. Newbern explained that Council needs to appoint a replacement to fill the vacant seat on the board left by former Mayor Stoy. This board has one County representative, Bob Brockman, one private citizen representative, Bob Little, and one City Representative. Councilmember Gooch made a motion and Mayor Pro Tem Andrew Lemmon seconded the motion to appoint Mayor Gary Ates as the City representative to the Heart of Georgia Regional Commission Board. The motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor.

Item # 3 – Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Discuss Council training opportunities with the Georgia Municipal Association. The Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) Annual Conference will be held in Savannah, GA June 23, 2017 through June 27, 2017. Registration opens March 7, 2017. Council is asked to make their class selections and hotel preferences to the City Clerk before March 7th. Councilmembers Gooch, Gilman, Mayor Ates, City Manager Richard Newbern, and possibly Mayor Pro Tem Lemmon plan to attend. Mayor Ates stated that the cost of this conference was not included in the budget but because it is an annual event, it should be budgeted every year. Councilmember Thrower stated that the Westin in Savannah was the best place to stay. Councilmember Gilman stated that all who are going should stay in the same hotel. Councilmember Gilman suggested that the per diem cap of \$40 per day for meals should be increased. City Manager, Richard Newbern explained that \$40 per day for four (4) days would be \$160 for meals. A check for that amount could be given to each person attending the conference and it could be spent by each one as they deemed fit for their meals. Councilmember Thrower stated that the City's personnel policy on the \$40 per meal maximum should not apply at their (Council) level. He felt if he as a Councilmember wanted to buy dinner for another City's mayor or council, he should be able to do so without having to pay from his pocket. Police Chief Chris Coley stated that he has had to pay the City back for money spent on meals that exceeded \$40 per day. Mayor Ates suggested raising the per diem amount to \$70 per day. Councilmember

Thrower stated that he thinks the existing policy should be changed for Councilmembers for any travel expenses. He stated that the City should not dictate what Council spends on meals. He said the Council answers to the citizens of Cochran. Mayor Ates said he still feels there should be a limit. Councilmember Gilman stated that he did not agree. Councilmember Thrower made a motion and Councilmember Gilman seconded the motion that the \$40 per day limit for meals be removed and that no cap be applied to Mayor, Councilmembers, or Department Head's travel expenses. The motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor.

Public Comments (Please note that every individual who signs up to speak prior to the meeting will be given a total of five minutes to address the Mayor and Council.) None

Mayor Updates

City Manager Discussion/Items/Updates

Mr. Newbern advised Council that Tracy Jones, current Finance Administrator, will be named as interim City Clerk as of March 6, 2017 due to the resignation of current City Clerk, Jill Cooper. She will still be responsible for the duties of Financial Administrator as well, until such time as a permanent City Clerk has been appointed. Tracy Jones will carry out all duties of the position of City Clerk as well as have all supervisory duties. Mrs. Jones thanked the Council for the opportunity and advised that she would be

applying for the permanent City Clerk position. Councilmember Thrower stated that he felt Tracy Jones should receive the entry level salary amount of the City Clerk instead of the standard 5% increase given for an interim position; especially since she would be doing both the duties of the City Clerk and the Finance Administrator. Mr. Newbern advised that the Council could make a motion to amend the personnel policy in this case. City Clerk, Jill Cooper stated that the entry level salary for Financial Administrator should have been \$40,863.41 but Tracy Jones was hired as Financial Administrator at a salary of \$32,017.55. Mr. Newbern stated that Tracy Jones was hired as a Financial Coordinator, not Financial Administrator. City Clerk, Jill Cooper stated that there is no position at City Hall for Financial Coordinator, or a salary range. Mr. Newbern said he thought Jill Cooper, who was previously the Financial Administrator before being appointed as City Clerk, was the Financial Coordinator and that is why her salary had always been \$34,000. Mrs. Cooper stated that her job title had always been Financial Clerk and that her salary of \$34,000 was below the minimum salary of \$40,863.61 as stated in the City's Salary Table. Councilmember Thrower asked if that salary amount included the 2% cost of living increase that was approved in November 2016. Mrs. Cooper stated it did not. Councilmember Thrower made a motion and Mayor Pro Tem Lemmon seconded the motion that Tracy Jones' salary be changed to \$41,680.67 and she be paid the difference between her starting salary of \$32,017.55 and \$41,680.67 retroactively to her first day of employment of January 4, 2017. The motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor. Councilmember Thrower made a motion and Mayor Pro Tem Lemmon seconded the motion to increase Tracy Jones' salary 15% when she becomes interim City Clerk on March 6, 2017 which would be an increase of her salary to \$47,932.77. The motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor. Councilmember Thrower directed City Clerk, Jill Cooper, to check the salary scale for all employees against their currently pay amount.

Department updates.

City Manager, Richard Newbern, asked Police Chief Chris Coley to give Council an update on the DOT By-Pass Widening Project. Chief Coley stated that he did not have a set date for implementation of the construction detour. He said the project would consist of two (2) phases, with the first phase being the widening of the by-pass and phase 2 being the overpass at the railroad tracks beyond Cook Road. The stated the official detour would be Second Street but the other side streets would be impacted for all traffic except commercial. The project is estimated to take two (2) years up to a maximum of three (3) years.

Council Discussion Items

Mayor Ates asked if the Council wished to discuss an increase in compensation for Councilmembers as was discussed at the Council Retreat in January 2017. Councilmember Thrower stated he felt a \$100 stipend should be given to Councilmembers for each special called meeting attend in addition to the regular monthly meetings. Councilmember Gilman made a motion and Councilmember Gooch seconded the motion to give a \$100 stipend to Councilmembers for each additional meeting they attend outside the regular monthly meetings. The motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor.

Councilmember Thrower made a motion and Councilmember Gilman seconded the motion to adjourn.

Adjourn @ 8:35

(Seal)

Jill Cooper, Interim City Clerk