



MINUTES
Cochran City Council
Tuesday, January 10, 2016
Regular Meeting @ 7:00 PM

Community House located at 192 South Third Street, Cochran, GA 31014

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

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

City Clerk Jill Cooper read the minutes of the December 13, 2016 Regular Session and December 22, 2016 Special Called Meeting.

Councilmember Thrower made a motion and Mayor Pro Tem seconded the motion to approve the December 13, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes and the December 22, 2016 Special Called Meeting Minutes. Motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor.

Agenda Items

Item #1 – Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Report on Pouring Licenses/Alcoholic Beverage Ordinance revisions. Mr. Newbern stated that the City is working on the permit application and will be issuing alcohol pouring license in due time. It is the desire of the Council to remove the distance from private housing limitation for package sale businesses. City Attorney, Leo Phillips is researching wording for new ordinance for review at February meeting. Mr. Newbern should have a new draft ordinance by then. Councilmember Fleming Gilman asked when the City would be prepared to issue the alcohol licenses. Mr. Newbern stated in approximately two weeks.

Item # 2 – Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Report on Business License renewals. Mr. Newbern stated that the City has issued 105 Business License Renewals. These renewals were issued based on input by the City Police Department and the City Fire Department. We are in the process of streamlining the process and have come up with a form for all new businesses to be signed off on by the Building Inspector, Tax Assessor's Office, Health Department, Police Department, and Fire Department to insure compliance with City Ordinances and State Law. The City Clerk is authorized to review and issue business licenses. Mr. Newbern advised that there are still some businesses that are delinquent in renewing their business licenses. Mayor Ates asked if these businesses are still operating. Police Chief Coley advised that they can operate until March. Councilmember Thrower asked what happens if they don't renew by March. Chief Coley advised that they would then be sited. He estimates that approximately 35 businesses are delinquent at this time.

Item # 3 – Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Appointment of Mayor to fill unexpired term through December 31, 2017. Mr. Newbern asked the Council to consider making an appointment to fill the expired seat at tonight's meeting. He advised that one citizen, Ms. Carol Denmark, came forward to nominate herself for the vacant seat. He stated that the City Attorney, Leo Phillips, had indicated that any appointee must receive at least four (4) votes in favor to be appointed. Council is also asked to appoint someone to fill the vacant Mayor's seat. Mayor Pro-Tem asked when the next election would be. Mr. Newbern answered the date would be November 7, 2017. Councilmember Thrower made a motion and Councilmember Gilman seconded the motion to appoint Gary Ates as Mayor to serve the remaining term. The motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor. Mr. Newbern reminded that Council that they are now in a position to fill Mayor Ates' vacant Council seat and the nominee would require at least four (4) votes to pass. Councilmember Thrower asked if the vacancy of the Council seat would have to be filled tonight. Mr. Newbern answered no but the City Charter stated that the vacancy "shall" be filled. Mayor Pro-Tem stated they would have a Special Called Meeting to discuss the vacancy and Mr. Newbern advised that it was Council's choice. Councilmember Gilman stated they would need to get a list of names of those who would be interested in filling the vacant Council seat. Mayor Ates asked to defer further discussion to Executive Session.

Item # 4 – Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Review budget calendar. Mr. Newbern gave an overview of the budget calendar. He advised that he and the Department Heads would be setting goals for revenues and expenditures and will bring proposed budget to the Council. The City's goal would be to adopt the new fiscal year budget by June 13, 2017. He would like to get recommendations from the Council for dates for budget discussions. He advised Councilmembers that they could invite anyone requesting budget funds to attend these discussions. Councilmember Thrower stated that he wanted the milage rate to stay the same and there should be no surprises after 17 budget meetings. Councilmember Gilman said he felt any budget changes or unspent budget monies should be brought to Council and approved before they are spent.

Item # 5 – Presented by City Engineer, Skip Layton of Falcon Design Consultants

Update on utility projects. Mr. Layton passed out an overview of all utility projects currently underway. He explained the projects currently being funded by three GEFA loans.

- Loan #15-002-\$1.35 Million-Phase I Sewer Rehabilitation-Contractor-American Infrastructure Technologies. This project encompasses slip-lining existing sewer lines and raising manholes. Completion deadline is February 1st and is running on schedule. This loan has a \$225,000 debt forgiveness if all funds are expended.
- Loan #-15-009-\$2.5 Million-Phase II Sewer Rehabilitation-Contractor-Griffin Folsom Industries. This project encompasses replacement of Lake Linda lift station, which is set to begin construction in March; and installation of a gravity-fed sewer system to serve the Tenth (10th) Street area. The gravity-fed system will require an environmental impact study and surveying is being done by drone. This loan has a \$500,000 debt forgiveness if all funds are expended.
- Loan #15-019-\$2.5 Million-Phase I Water Rehabilitation-Water Meter Replacement-Contractor-Consolidated Pipe & Supply and Elevated Water Tank Rehabilitation-Contractor-Utility Services Company. These projects encompass replacing existing water meters with radio read meters and installing back flow prevention on all residential meters; Also cleaning out, stripping, and repainting all four (4) elevated water tanks. Project is approximately half-way completed; there have been some issues with error's in the City's old records regarding the number of meters and the correct types. Back flow prevention is required by law and commercial business owners will be required to have these installed at their cost. This loan has a \$500,000 debt forgiveness is all funds are expended.

Councilmember Gilman expressed his displeasure at the impact of pressure issues for 7 customers. Mr. Layton stated that 7 issues out of 1500 meter replacements is a good record. Councilmember Thrower asked if the back flow prevention requirement would be enforced. Mr. Newbern stated it would be. Councilmember Thrower asked if the City would be sending a letter to businesses explaining this requirement. Mr. Newbern said businesses would be informed. Mr. Layton explained that the Vernon Road Tank has been completed except for the logo and the Ann Street tank is next. Each tank rehab takes about two (2) months to complete and expected completion date is November 2017. Councilmember Thrower asked when was the last time these tanks were serviced. Mr. Layton answered the Dykes Street tank was done approximately 12-13 years ago. There were no records found on the other 3 wells. The industry standard is every 8 years.

- 2015 CDBG Grant-\$500,000-Target Area-Ann Street-Contractor-Insituform Technologies. This project was engineered by G. Ben Turnipseed Engineers and the project scope has been completed. The City brought in Skip Layton with Falcon Design Consultants to do additional work in the area with the approximately \$69,000 CDBG unspent funds. The grant amendment has been sent to DCA for approval as there is additional work that needs to be done in the Ann Street area.
- 2016 CDBG Grant-\$500,000-Target Area-Railroad Avenue-Contractor-Not awarded.

Councilmember Thrower asked Mr. Layton if he negotiated contracts. Mr. Layton explained that he did not. The specifications are placed out for bid and the lowest bid gets the contract. There are no negotiations. Councilmember Thrower asked if contractors and their employees could be required to stay in local hotels when working in our City. Mr. Layton said that it could not be required but could be encouraged.

Item # 6 – Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Approve City Manager contract. City Manager Evaluation Committee recommended a new three (3) year contract beginning January 1, 2017 which includes allowing the City Manager to drive the City vehicle home and a \$3000.00 annual pay increase. This contract would replace the existing contract which would have expired December 31, 2017. Councilmember Thrower made a motion and Councilmember Gooch seconded the motion to allow Mayor Ates to sign the contract for the Council. The motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor. Councilmember Thrower made a motion and Councilmember Gilman seconded the motion to approve the new three (3) year contract. The motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor.

Item # 7 – Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Status of drainage projects and hydro-excavator purchase. Mr. Newbern asked Jacob Daniels, Public Works Director to advise the Council of plans to address the drainage project on Peter Street. He also explained that the 2016 LMIG Grant funds will be used to stripe roads in the City limits. Mr. Daniels will be getting a list of road to stripe and will get bids for the work. With the funds available, we could be able to stripe about 13 miles of road. He asked Council for input on any roads that need re-striping. Councilmember Thrower asked about Westside Road and due to the high traffic, would like to see fog striping on sides of road. Mayor Ates stated that Roberson Crescent needed resurfacing. Mr. Daniels replied that it is not on the priority paving list but would be repaved as soon as possible. Councilmember Gilman asked about the red painting done on campus and on Ann Street curbs. He asked Fire Chief Kevin Noles who stated it was mark Fire Zones where no parking was allowed. Councilmember Lemmon asked if the area behind Family Dollar could be considered for the next CDBG Target Area. He also asked about the new street signs being made by Middle Georgia Signs. Mr. Daniels stated they were expected to begin installing the signs the first part of February. Mr. Daniels also stated that he was still working on the bid package for the Hydro-Excavator and would try to have it for the next meeting.

Item # 8 – Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Approve 2015-2016 Budget Amendment and Budget Transfers for audit. Councilmember Thrower did not want to approve Budget Amendment until he could look at the amendment detail. Mr. Newbern explained that this amendment was standard practice to balance the budget for the audit. The amendment was recommended and prepared by the City's audit consultant firm, Giddens and Bennett. Councilmember Thrower stated he would look it over during executive session.

Item # 9 – Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Discuss request by William Lucas concerning right-of-way. Item was deferred to Executive Session.

Item # 10 – Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Discuss drainage issue at College Station Apartments owned by Woody Butts, Jr. Mr. Newbern explained that there is a three (3) foot wide drain pipe in front of Mr. Butts apartments. The drainage cannot be addressed until the issues with the intersecting water and sewer lines can be fixed. Mr. Layton explained that the drainage system is overloaded due to water service lines being jointed through the drainage pipe. If the water lines can be moved it would be the least expensive option. Lining the pipe would be the most expensive. There needs to be more investigation to see the best option to address the water lines, which run through the drainage pipe and restrict the flow of water. Mr. Butts plans to re-pave the parking lot and entrance to the apartment complex and would like this fixed before he does. Councilmember Thrower made a motion and Councilmember Lemmon seconded the motion to repair the drainage issues in the most cost effective manner. 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.)

Rene Cannon addressed the Council regarding her concerns that the fencing done at the airport crosses her property. This blocks access to her property. Councilmember Thrower said he would go look at it and advise City Manager.

Mayor Updates

- Mayor Ates attended the Gas Authority meeting and said it was a good meeting. Jointly Owned thanked the Council for approving the contract to increase gas capacity for Kumo Tire.
- Mayor Ates asked about the progress with the basketball courts at the Peyton Williams Center. Code Enforcement Officer, Willie Farrow, told Council that the asphalt was laid last week. The courts will be surveyed and then striped. The goals, benches, and signs would be the last thing. He advised that there will be a divider put up between the two courts to separate the adult court from the children's court. Mayor Ates wants to have a dedication ceremony when courts are completed.

City Manager Discussion/Items/Updates

- The dates for the Council Retreat at Little Ocmulgee State Park are Thursday afternoon through Saturday, January 26th -28th. Arrangements are meeting made for Council to meet with the facilitator, Dr. Brooke Miller, before the retreat, possibly next Tuesday at City Hall. Councilmember Gilman asked if the facilitator would be there both days. Mr. Newbern said yes. He also stated that he asked Bob Brockman again, in person, to attend the retreat. Georgia Power is contributing \$500 toward the cost of the retreat.

- The City has been working with the County to address the serious drainage issues at the Recreation Department.
- We will be paying \$70,000 to SPLOST 06 by the end of January. We will try to pay more when the City finances are assessed at the completion of the audit. Councilmember Gilman asked if the facilitator had set her fee yet. Mr. Newbern responded no.
- The City Hall will be closed Monday, January 16th in honor of Martin Luther King. The parade will be Monday at 1:00 pm.
- The next Chamber Board Meeting will be Wednesday, January 18th at La Cabana at 12:00 pm.
- The Chamber Banquet will be at Middle Georgia State University on Thursday, February 2nd at Georgia Hall.

Department updates.

Police Chief Chris Coley highlighted that his report showed a 20% decrease in violent “person crimes”. Animal Control picked up 364 animals last year with 35% in the City and 65% in the County. Councilmember Gilman asked when the new Animal Control truck would be here. Chief Coley advised that the truck came in December but we are waiting for the graphics and equipment to be installed. Councilmember Gilman asked if we flew Darrell Miller out to pick up the truck. Chief Coley said yes because Brannen Ford was going to charge \$1000 to deliver the truck and it only cost \$500 for us to go get it.

Fire Chief Kevin Noles asked for comments or questions about his monthly and annual report. There were none.

Public Works Director Jacob Daniels asked for comments or questions about his monthly and annual report. There were none.

Council Discussion Items

Councilmember Gooch asked about the tablets. City Clerk, Jill Cooper, advised that they had been ordered. Discussion of installation of safety glass in front lobby was deferred to retreat.

Councilmember Gooch made a motion and Councilmember Thrower seconded the motion to go into Executive session. Motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor.

Councilmember Thrower made a motion and Councilmember Lemmon seconded the motion to come out of Executive Session and return to Regular Session. The motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor.

Councilmembers wish to review details of budget amendment before approving. Councilmember Thrower stated that the City needs to set a policy in place to protect records and follow through on motions to be sure they are carried out in a timely manner. He asked when would the City Manager and Finance Administrator know how much more we can pay towards SPLOST 06 debt. Mr. Newbern advised after audit is completed.

Councilmember Cranford made a motion and Councilmember Gooch seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor.

Adjourn @ 11: 05

(Seal)