



**MINUTES**  
**Cochran City Council**  
**Tuesday, January 11, 2022**  
**Regular Scheduled Meeting @ 7PM**

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

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Present: Mayor Billy Yeomans, Mayor Pro Tem Gary Ates  
Councilmembers: Keith Anderson, Carla Coley, Jimmy Jones, Andrew Lemmon

Absent: Councilmember Rufus Veal

Call to order by Mayor Billy Yeomans @ 7:02PM

The invocation was given by Mayor Billy Yeomans followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilmember Jones.

Mayor stated there was an updated agenda provided and asked for any corrections additions or deletions.

Councilmember Coley stated there were a few items discussed during the work session to be added to the regular agenda.

Mayor stated three items needed to be placed on the January 8, 2022, Agenda.

1-Item # 14 Consider approving the Safer Grant application 2022 for the Fire Department in the amount of \$414,000. Councilmember Ates made the motion to approve this addition Item #14 to the agenda with a second by Councilmember Anderson. Motion passed with all voting in favor. 5/0

2- Item #15 Consider the newly appointments to DDA Board of Directors. Councilmember Ates made the motion to approve the added item # 15 with a second by councilmember coley. 5/0

Mayor called for a motion to approve the January 11, 2022; agenda as presented. Councilmember Ates made the motion to approve the agenda with all additions with a second from Councilmember Anderson.

Mayor called for a motion to approve the minutes from December 14, 2021.

Mayor Pro Tem Ates made the motion to accept 12/14/21 minutes with a second by Councilmember Anderson. Councilmember Coley requested the correction of Melvin Lane to Mendel Lane on Item #8.

Mayor asked for all parties voting to withdraw the motion. Ates withdrew the motion with Councilmember Anderson withdrawing the second. Mayor called for the motion for approval of the December 14, 2021, minutes with the changes requested to change the road name from Melvin to Mendel. Council Ates made the motion to approve the minutes as changed with a second from Councilmember Anderson. Motion passed with all voting in favor.  
Motion passed with all voting in favor. 5-0

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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**

Employee of the Month. Employee of the month was presented to Sgt. Derek Warren with the Cochran Fire Department. This award was presented by Chief Wilcher.

**ITEM #2- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern**

Recognize Charles Beck on his retirement from the City of Cochran. This item was deferred to the February meeting due to employee not able to attend meeting.

**ITEM #3- Presented by City Clerk, Tracy B Jones**

Oath of Office for newly elected officials. City Clerk, Tracy B Jones started with the swearing in of the Mayor of Cochran. She also swore in Andrew Lemmon, Carla Coley and Keith Anderson.

**ITEM #4- Presented by City Clerk, Tracy B Jones**

Election of Mayor Pro Tem. Mayor Yeomans thanked Mayor Pro Tem Gary Ates for his service as mayor Pro Tem for year 2021. Accordance with Section 2.34 of the City Charter, the Mayor Pro Tem will sit in for the mayor if the mayor is incapacitated for any reason or out of town. Mayor called for nominations for the position of r Mayor Por Tem for calendar year 2022. Councilmember Coley nominated Councilmember Keith Anderson for 2022 Mayor Pro Tem. Mayor Yeomans called for raise of right hand to vote for Mayor Pro Tem Anderson. Unanimous 5/0

**ITEM #5- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern**

Designate Retreat Location and Facilitator. The Council was asked to choose a retreat location and a facilitator for the 2022 Retreat. Richard Newbern stated the retreat is scheduled for February 0-12, 2022. Facilitator was discussed in the Work Session. The UGA was contacted and not available to serve at the retreat. This vote will be two parts; councilmember Ates made the motion to choose Dr. Brooke Miller for the facilitator with a second by Councilmember Anderson. City Clerk, Tracy B Jones went over the choices of the locations available to attend the retreat. 1. Little Ocmulgee State Park McRae (\$5,970.75), 2. Lake Blackshear Resort in Cordele (\$6,551.55) 3. Sea Palms, St Simmons (\$10,563.82)4. Cochran Auditorium (\$500.00) Councilmember Ates made the motion to attend Lake Blackshear with a second by Councilmember Anderson. Yes votes -Ates, Anderson, Lemmon No votes – Coley, Jones.

**ITEM #6- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern**

Consider approval of Resolution calling for a Referendum on distilled spirit sales – Council was asked to call for a referendum for sales of distilled spirits. The referendum will be held on the State Primary day of Tuesday, May 24, 2022. Election Superintendent, Tracy B Jones produced a resolution prepared by the City Attorney. Mrs. Jones spoke with City Attorney and with Probate Judge Jonathan Fordham to work together for the city to handle the election for this item. A contract between the City and County will be executed when in agreeing. City Attorney stated prior to 2021 legislative session the only way to hold such a referendum was to get a high amount of the percentage of voters of the community. The General Assembly changed and allowed the governing authority to adopt a resolution or ordinances to call for the referendum. Councilmember Anderson made the motion to approve the resolution calling for referendum on distilled spirits sales with a second by Councilmember Ates. Mayor Yeomans called for a voice vote. Anderson- Yes, Ates- Yes, Coley-Yes, Jones- Yes, Lemmon- Yes. Motion passed with all voting in favor. 5/0.

Police Chief Trawick introduced the newest hire to the Cochran, Police Department, Jacob Rios.

**ITEM #7- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern**

Discuss and consider Police Department compensation. Mr. Newbern briefly went through the proposal of police compensation to police officers new and old for the Council Consideration. City of Cochran can consider options to police compensation which is a growing issue. Much of the issue is recruitment and compensation for patrol personnel. Presently there are 8 patrol positions five are filled and three are not and one of these are in the process of being filled. Present city entry level is 16.74 or 17.07 per hour, depending on experience. Effective January 1, 2022, Bleckley County Sheriff Department adjusted all patrol officer to \$20.00 per hour for incumbent full-time officer and \$18.00 to newly hired officers. Council can consider approving a proposal for adjusting police compensation. Regional Commission is conducting a pay classification plan for the city. The compensation would impact the city budget. If council approves proposal, they will need to amend the 2021-2022 budget. This will need to be approved to come revenue from budget transfers from gas fund and solid waste fund. A discussion concerning the amount of entry level and salaries of employees. Chief Trawick elaborated on the prior competitiveness on the pay with the department. His concerns are the loss of officers to other agencies due to pay being competitive. Councilmember coley asked Mr. Newbern if the pay classification plan will be able to include tenure and education and certification? Mr. Newbern replied yes. Mrs. Coley had two concerns; one was looking at recruitment compensation, but if not making it competitive with the Sheriff's Dept because the Sheriffs Department will be higher although it is great to raise salaries, the officers will go back and forth to whomever is paying the most at the time. She did not feel the increase would stop the officers from going to other agencies. She thinks if we want to be competitive, then that is exactly what we need to do. He strongly agrees the officers need higher salaries. Also, thought needs to be given to the ones who are satisfied in the position they are in, and compensation need to be given for the time they have vested. Councilmember Ates suggested to raise the rate \$4 to make it \$20. Mr. Newbern explained the increase range would be 17.85 to 19.85. The Council's discussion was to bring the amount to \$20.00. The question arose if the pay classification plan that is presented to Council that the Regional Commission is working on, adopted along with this approved increase of the Police Department Salary and adjust it accordingly. Councilmember Jones made a motion to make entry level for Police Department match the Sherriff Department which is \$18/hr with a second from Councilmember Ates. Motion passed with all voting in favor 5/0.

Councilmember Ates made the motion move 5 incumbent officers to \$20/HR with Councilmember Jones. Mayor Yeomans asked Councilmember Ates and Jones to withdraw the motion. Both withdrew the motion. Councilmember Ates made the motion to increase the 5 incumbent officers to \$20/hr with the range extending to \$21.75 with a second by Councilmember Jones. Motion passed with all voting in

favor. 5/0 On behalf of the Police officers and staff, Chief Trawick thanked the Council. Councilmember made a Jones motion to amend the budget by ordinance with a second by Councilmember Ates. Motion passed with all voting in favor. 5/0

Mayor Yeomans assured the city employees a pay classification plan is being conducted for ALL employees.

**ITEM #8- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern**

Consider purchase of ground-penetrating radar equipment for the Public Works Department – The Council was asked to approve the purchase of a \$37,5000 Ground Penetrating Radar unit that will allow the city to approve. Willie Farrow addressed the Council with details on the radar. He stated a demo was conducted. This machine will allow the lines to be located to avoid road cuts or mislocating. Use at cemetery to locate graves and at the wastewater treatment plant. The depth of penetration could possibly go 20 to 25 feet. A two-year warranty on unit and a year warranty on the battery. Councilmember Ates made the motion to purchase the ground penetration radar equipment with a second by Councilmember Lemmon. Motion passed with all voting in favor. 5/0

**ITEM #9- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern**

Consider adoption of budget calendar. A budget calendar for the development of the city's FY 2022/23 budget was prepared for Council approval. Department head meetings will be held to kick off the efforts to create a budget and discuss the five-year budget. Going down the list of the calendar dates includes work from city staff. The first budget work session scheduled for the council is d for Tuesday April 12, 2022. May 17 will be an additional work session for council to work on budget. The budget hearing scheduled for Tuesday; June 7 has been advertised as required by law. Goal is for Council to adopt the FY 2022/23 on the regular meeting, Tuesday, June 14, 2022. After the vote of approval, the City Manager and Department heads can start work on the city budget. Councilmember Jones made the motion to adopt the 2022/23 FY budget calendar. With a second from Councilmember Lemmon. Motion passed with all voting in favor. 5/0

**ITEM #10- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern**

Consider approving approach to developing a 2022 CDBG application to be submitted to Georgia DCA. Council is asked to approve the city's development of a \$750,000 CDBG Neighborhood Revitalization & Housing application for the Robertson – Crescent /Sixth Street area. Rhonda Gilbert from Gilbert and Associates will assist with the grant application at no cost and if funded her firm will be hired to administer the Grant. The deadline is Friday June 3, 2022. The grant was not funded last year, and the Council is asked for approval to reapply for the area. The motion will have to include Gilbert & Associates would be chosen to handle the application. Councilmember Ates made the motion to approve the adoption of the 2022 CDBG Grant application submitted to GA DCA and to include Rhonda & Associates to process the application with a second from Councilmember Anderson. Motion passed with all voting in favor. 5/0.

**ITEM #11- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern**

Consider approving standard for use of the Peyton Williams Building 172 Thompson Street. Mayor Yeomans stated this was discussed at the work session and the Council decided to allow the city attorney to look into the terms and conditions along with legal documents in order to approve this agreement.

**ITEM #12- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern**

Consider voting delegate for Special Called Meeting of GMA at Cities United January 23, 2022. Councilmember Ates nominated Mayor Billy Yeomans to be the voting delegate with a second by Councilmember Anderson. Motion passed with all voting in favor. 5/0

**ITEM #13- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern**

Consider appointing Howard Pridgen to Housing Authority Board. Mr. Pridgen will replace Mr. Charles King with his term being 11/21/2021 to 11/20/2026, five-year term. Councilmember Ates made the motion to appoint Mr. Howard Pridgen to the Housing Authority Board with a second by Councilmember Jones. Motion passed with all voting in favor. 5/0

**ITEM #14- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern**

Consider Safer Grant Application 2022 for Cochran Fire Department to receive a grant for three full time fire fighters for three years. Councilmember Ates made the motion to approve the Safer Grant Application for Cochran Fire Department for three full time fire fighters with a second by Councilmember Jones. This motion will also include to use Mayor Davidson as the grant writer. Motion passed with all voting in favor. 5/0

**ITEM #15- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern**

Consider appointing three DDA Board of Directors. The positions are up for renewal March 4, 2022. It is the Council's decision to appoint the three. Mayor Yeomans stated each name will be voted on one at a time. DDA Director, David Canady, stated the DDA Board asked him to speak on their behalf due to closed meeting. Mr. Canady distributed the nominations. Board met and nominated the three positions to renew for the next term, Diane Lester, Carla Coley and Jeff Reagan with the position as members on the DDA Board. As part of by-laws, members have to be nominated and agreement with City Council, Council will vote to approve the members nominated. Mayor called for a motion to approve reappointment to Diane Lester to the new terms that will expire March 4, 2026. Councilmember Coley made the motion to reappoint Diane Lester with a second by Councilmember Anderson. 5/0 Mayor called for a motion to reappoint Carla Coley for a new term to expire March 4, 2026. Councilmember Ates had concerns about conflict of interest regarding the reappoint of the Councilmember to the DDA Board. City Attorney stated the state law permits the DDA to have one member of the Council governing body to serve on the DDA Board. Mayor Yeomans stated his opinion concerning the good job Mrs. Coley has done with the DDA but does not think she should serve should a conflict arise. He thinks it is time for the DDA to be the business leaders of the community. Mr. Canady responded, the reason the board moved forward with the nominated members is the board is very new, not even three years old; trying to form some continuity installed that are beginning and in process as well as the new annotation of rural zone as well a new Executive Director and the motivation was to development some consistency for the next few years. Mayor asked how long the board felt Mrs. Coley needed to be on the board, 6years? Councilmember Ates suggested Mrs. Coley could be an advisor to the DDA. Councilmember Anderson made the motion to reappoint Councilmember Coley for a new term to expire March 4, 2026, with a second by Councilmember Jones. Motion passed 4 voting Yes (Anderson, Jones, Lemmon, Coley) 1 abstained (Ates). Mayor called for a motion to reappoint Jeff Reagan to serve a new term to expire March 4, 2026. Councilmember Jones made the motion to reappoint Jeff Reagan to serve a new term to expire March 4, 2026, with a second by Councilmember Lemmon. Motion passed with all voting in favor 5/0.

**Council Discussion Items:**

**District 1**

Councilmember Anderson: Happy New Year. Praying for City Staff. Congratulation to GA Bulldawgs!

Councilmember Ates: Happy New Year. Praying for City Staff. Suggested to close City Hall if necessary. Wants everyone to be safe. Concerns about COVID

**District 2**

Councilmember Coley: Reminded everyone the concert at the City Auditorium

Councilmember Veal: Absent

**District 3**

Councilmember Jones: Nothing

Councilmember Lemmon: Nothing

Mayor Yeomans: information on City Managers Annual review is due. HE appointed Ates, Coley, Lemmon to conduct the City Manager's Annual review and finalize it by the retreat.

Mayor stated the Council voted to use the Robert's Rules of Order. And Council will continue use those rules. Also, according to the Charter, a sign must be posted on the meeting location giving the public notice of place and time of the meeting. Mayor explained he has four Mayors Committee, and he will probably do away with all the committees due to not productive and not meeting. He will choose a committee that will be utilized. Stressed to be mindful of the attorney's time.

Councilmember Jones made the motion to adjourn with a second by Councilmember Ates.  
Meeting adjourned @ 8:35PM.

(SEAL)

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Tracy B Jones  
City Clerk