



DRAFT MINUTES
Cochran City Council
Tuesday, May 14, 2024
Regular Scheduled Meeting @ 7:00PM

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

Present: Mayor Billy Yeomans, Mayor Pro-Tem Carla Coley
Councilmembers: Keith Anderson, Gary Ates, Shane Savant, Lonnie Tedders,
City Attorney, Jim Elliott, City Manager, Richard Newbern, Interim City Clerk, Julie Peche
Absent Councilmember Andrew Lemmon

I. Call to Order by the Mayor
II. Invocation
III. Pledge of Allegiance
IV. Attendance
V. Adopt Agenda
VI. Approve Minutes
VII. Agenda Items

- I. Call to order by Mayor Billy Yeomans @ 7:00PM Mayor Yeomans.
- II. The invocation was given by Councilmember Ates.
- III. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by City Manager, Richard Newbern.
- IV. The Mayor noted 5 council members were present. Councilmember Andrew Lemmon was absent. We do have a quorum.
- V. Mayor asked for any corrections, additions, or deletions to the May 14, 2024, agenda. Councilmember Ates made a motion to accept the agenda as presented. Councilmember Tedders made a second with all council members in favor. Motion passed unanimously 5/0.
- VI. Mayor asked if additions or corrections were needed for the Tuesday, April 9, 2024, council meeting minutes. There were none and a motion was made to accept the minutes as presented for the Tuesday, April 9, 2024, Council meeting by Councilmember Ates with a second by Councilmember Tedders. The vote was unanimous 5/0, motion passed.

Mayor asked if additions or corrections were needed for the April 16, 2024, Special Called Meeting minutes. There were no corrections, and a motion was made to accept the minutes as presented for the April 16, 2024, Special Called Meeting by Councilmember Coley with a second by Councilmember Ates. The vote was unanimous, motion passed 5/0.

Mayor Yeomans stood to make a follow up statement concerning collection on City Property and Personal taxes to those in attendance and listening on social media. The Mayor thanked all residents that brought in their tax payment documentation to assist in clearing tax payment records, and their payments to clear pass due accounts. He thanked all staff for their work on the collection of taxes and data to clear paid accounts. He confirmed that the current system is being backed up daily to prevent any further loss of data. GTS was hired by the City Council in March 2024 to collect back due taxes. During this process, it was discovered that notices were sent to taxpayers that had paid their taxes. There was a weather-related incident that affected the tax database. The City has worked with taxpayers to clear accounts with paid taxes. Most notices sent by GTS were sent to taxpayers that legitimately owed taxes. Again, he thanked all citizens for their cooperation. He also stated that he had contacted the GBI and there is no investigation into this matter.

VII. Agenda Items

ITEM #1- Presented by Mayor, Billy Yeomans

Mayor Billy Yeomans read a proclamation recognizing Bleckley Memorial Hospital during National Hospital Week May 12 to May 18, 2024, in Cochran. Hospital Board Member, Mike Stoy, accepted on behalf of the hospital.

ITEM #2- Presented by Mayor, Billy Yeomans

Mayor Billy Yeomans read a proclamation recognizing May as Mental Health Month in Cochran. Councilmember Carla Coley accepted the proclamation on behalf of the Citizens of Cochran.

ITEM #3- Presented by Public Works Director, Willie Farrow

Public Works Director, Willie Farrow, presented the Public Works Employee of the Quarter to Street Supervisor William “Tiger” Odom. Tiger received a certificate of appreciation and a check for \$100. The Mayor and City Council thanked Tiger for his 19 years of dedication to the City of Cochran.

ITEM #4- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Mr. Newbern turned the discussion over to Police Chief, Jeff Trawick. The council is asked to consider closing several street segments for the Drey-Day celebration. Cherry Street from Second to Third and Third Street from Cherry to Dykes. Chief Trawick approves these closures for June 1, 2024. Councilmember Ates made a motion to accept the request from Drey-Day as recommended by Chief Trawick. Councilmember Anderson made a second. All were in favor, motion passed 5/0.

ITEM #5 - Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Consideration of the recommendation by City Manager, Richard Newbern, for the appointment of Candace Wells Summerall as City Clerk. Mr. Newbern thanked all who had participated in this process. A special thanks to Jessica Davies, City Clerk of Hawkinsville, who participated in the second round of interviews for several candidates. Ms. Summerall brings a strong background in finance to this position. She is active in the community participating on the GICH housing team and is currently on the board of the Chamber of Commerce. Council Councilmember Savant made a motion to accept the recommendation and appoint Candace Wells Summerall to the position of Cochran City Clerk. Councilmember Coley made a second. As a show of support, the Mayor asked for a voice vote of yea or nay. Councilmember Anderson – Yes, Councilmember Ates - Yes, Councilmember Coley – Yes, Savant – Yes, Councilmember Tedders – Yes. The vote was unanimous 5/0. The Mayor welcomed Ms. Summerall to the City. Ms. Summerall thanked the council for the unanimous vote.

ITEM #6- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

The Council was asked to appoint, by resolution, 2 council members as voting members to the MGAG (Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia) Board. Councilmember Anderson made a motion to appoint Gary Ates as the voting member and Shane Savant as alternate to the MGAG voting board. Councilmember Tedders made a second. The vote was unanimous 5/0.

ITEM #7- Presented by Willie Farrow, Public Works Director

The council has been asked to approve the submission of LMIG/LRA grant which is an addition to the annual LMIG paving projects. There are no match funds required for this grant. Mr. Farrow asks Council to approve the filing of this grant. Councilmember Ates made a motion to apply for the LMIG/LRA road paving grant. Councilmember Savant made a second to this motion. The vote was unanimous 5/0.

ITEM #8- Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Mr. Newbern discussed several adjustments to the Draft FY 24/25 budget. Next work session is scheduled for May 21, 2024, at 6:30 pm in the auditorium. Public Hearing on June 4, 2024, at 6:30 pm and is open to the public in the City Auditorium. Budget will be posted on the City website and copies will be available for pickup at City Hall on June 4, 2024. A second Public Hearing will be held during the Regular June Council meeting on Tuesday, June 11, 2024, at 7 pm. in the City Auditorium. Councilmember Coley asked for clarification of the increase in the street employee salaries. Councilmember Coley asked for the invoices from City of Hawkinsville for gas system services. This item requires no action by Council.

City Manager –

- Property tax collection is continuing.
- GMA Convention June 21-25, 2024.
- Scheduled work session on Strategic Planning with Dr. Carrie Hamilton Saturday, May 18, 2024. **Postponed.**
- 2024 CHIP grant has been awarded to the City for \$500,000 in home renovations.

City Attorney – Council will need to go into Executive Session

City Clerk – Please sign up for your spot for honored guest seating for graduation before you leave tonight.

Mayor – Thank you City Council and City Staff for all you do.

Council Discussion Items:

District 1

Anderson – No comments

Ates – No comments.

District 2

Coley – Would like a rental document to review for sponsoring agencies to host events on City property.

Tedders – No comments

District 3

Savant – Don't forget to early vote.

Lemmon – Not present.

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.)

Trichia Gardner with the Drey Day Foundation thanked the Council for their support for the 2024 Drey Day celebration on June 1.

Melissa Barker, President of the Chamber of Commerce, reminded everyone of the upcoming Chamber events.

Norman Simmons asked for assistance in resolving a tax issue from 2017. Mayor Yeomans asked Mr. Simmons to speak with him after the meeting.

Cris Coley complemented Council on how well they work together and to ask the city to "take the tax situation seriously".

This ended public comments.

Mayor asked if Council needed to go into Executive session. City Attorney Jim Elliott stated yes for a potential litigation issue.

8:56pm, Councilmember Savant made a motion to go into executive session with a second by Councilmember Ates. Motion passed 5/0.

9:24pm, Councilmember Ates made the motion to go back into back to regular session with a second by Councilmember Tedders. Motion passed 5/0.

9:25pm, Motion to adjourn by Councilmember Ates, with a second by Councilmember Savant. Motion passed. 5/0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:26 pm

(SEAL) _____

Julie D. Peche, Interim City Clerk