



**Cochran City Council
Tuesday, April 14, 2015
Regular Meeting Minutes**

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

Present: Mayor Stoy, Councilmembers Willie Basby, Gary Ates, Eric Bisher, Charles Cranford, Tommy Guyton and Andrew Lemmon.

Call to order by the Mayor. The invocation was given by Jerri Tuck followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilmember Eric Bisher.

Councilmember Basby made a motion and Councilmember Ates seconded the motion to adopt the agenda. Councilmember Basby made a motion and Councilmember Lemmon seconded the motion to approve the February 10, 2015 City Council Work Session Meeting Minutes and Regular Meeting Minutes and the March 12, 2015 Special Called Meeting Minutes. Motion passed unanimously with all in favor.

Due to the large crowd attending the meeting, Mayor Stoy decided that the flag protocol would be addressed first.

City Manager Newbern began the discussion by informing council that he had spoken with City Attorney Leo Phillips for guidance on flying the Christian flag. City Attorney Phillips advised the City Manager to not fly the flag on city property. The city would be exposed to honoring all and any flag that may be requested to fly. Councilmember Basby inquired about a designated area in the city to fly the Christian flag and other flags. Councilmember Guyton stated that a designated area would be available for any group but it should not be on city property but instead have someone give private land. He is concerned about the number of distasteful flags that could be requested to be flown.

Councilmember Basby made a motion and Councilmember Ates seconded the motion to have City Manager Newbern work with City Attorney Phillips to designate an area to fly all flags. This area would be a free speech zone. Councilmembers Bisher, Cranford and Lemmon voted yes; Councilmember Guyton voted no. Motion passed.

Public Comments

Members of the community, both city residents and county residents, spoke in support of City Hall flying the Christian flag and requested that the flag be erected at City Hall.

Councilmember Basby made a motion and Councilmember Ates seconded the motion to rescind the previous motion to have City Manager Newbern work with City Attorney Phillips to designate an area to fly all flags. Motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor.

Councilmember Ates made a motion and Councilmember Basby seconded the motion for the City to permanently fly only the Christian flag at City Hall along with the American and state flag. Councilmembers Bisher, Cranford and Lemmon voted yes; Councilmember Guyton voted no. Motion passed.

A ten minute recess was announced.

Meeting reconvened at 8:32pm.

Agenda Items

Item # 1 – Presented by Mayor Stoy

2015 Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia Annual Election. A motion was made by Councilmember Bisher and seconded by Councilmember Basby to appoint Mayor Stoy and City Manager Newbern as the delegates for the City of Cochran. Motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor.

Mayor Updates

Mayor Stoy asked Council for recommendations for the Public Safety and Recreational Committees. The Recreational Department has met and passed several proposed plans. Ryan Carnes spoke to Council about money concerns and cuts that may be made due to their finances. Mr. Carnes also thanked Councilmember Guyton for his support.

City Manager Updates

City Manager Newbern provided budget handouts to Council for their review. He announced a public budget meeting to be held on April 28, 2015 at 6:00pm at City Hall.

The City has openings for a Fire Chief, Police Officer, Code Enforcement Officer (part-time) and part-time summer help.

The possibility of raising the millage rate was discussed.

City Engineer Skip Layton gave an update on the water/sewer mapping. Everything is on schedule.

Cochran Clean-Up Day was announced for Saturday, April 25, 2015.

Council Discussion Items

Council responsibilities. Discussion was postponed.

Councilmember Ates made a motion and Councilmember Guyton seconded the motion to enter Executive Session. Motion carried unanimously with all voting in favor.

Councilmember Ates made a motion and Councilmember Basby seconded the motion to exit Executive Session. Motion carried unanimously with all voting in favor.

Councilmember Bisher made a motion and Councilmember Lemmon seconded the motion to accept the proposal to consolidate the Cochran/Bleckley Chamber of Commerce and the IDA (Industrial Development Authority). Councilmembers Ates, Basby and Cranford voted yes and Councilmember Guyton voted no. Motion passed.

Councilmember Ates made a motion and Councilmember Basby seconded the motion to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor.

Adjourn 9:43 pm.

Lisa Chastain
City Clerk