



MINUTES
Cochran City Council
Tuesday, December 13, 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, 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 November 15, 2016 regular session.

Councilmember Thrower made a motion and Councilmember Cranford seconded the motion to approve the November 15, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes. Motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor.

Agenda Items

Item #1 – Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Conduct public hearing for the purpose of discussing the approved activities of the City's Community Development Block Grant Award for the Railroad Avenue infrastructure improvements. Mr. Newbern passed out CDBG Grant Award paperwork to Council. He explained this grant would be for drainage, road, and sewer/water system repairs in the Railroad Avenue area. These improvements would affect 87 residents in the target area. Mr. Newbern thanked City Engineer, Skip Layton, for his work in developing the plans for these improvements and announced the work would begin in the spring. The total project cost would be \$684,000, with \$500,000 covered by the CDBG Grant with \$184,00 balance to be covered through GEFA, SPLOST, AND TIA funding. The City is currently working with the railroad to obtain easements. There were no questions or public comments.

Item # 2 – Presented by Municipal Gas Authority Regional Manager, Rusty Hough

Consider Resolution to approve additional firm gas capacity from Southern Natural Gas Pipeline. Mr. Hough explained that the Municipal Gas Authority and its members have been given an opportunity to expand our natural gas capacity. This expansion has already been approved by other Jointly Owned partners, City of Warner Robins, Bryron, Perry, and Hawkinsville. This would allow increased natural gas capacity for the Kumo Tire plant which would result in increased revenue from their usage. Mr. Hough also advised that capacity can be reduced if found the additional is not needed or used. He also advised that the gas line that feeds into Cochran must be upgraded to comply with current standards. This upgrade cost estimate is \$850,000 to 1,000,000 which would be worked into contract rates with Jointly Owned. Councilmember Thrower made a motion and Councilmember Gilman seconded the motion to approve the resolution to approve the additional gas capacity from Southern Natural Gas Pipeline. The motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor.

Item # 3 – Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Consider Resolution to approve Butler/Snow as agent to prepare the Continuing Disclosure and Annual Report to the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board on the various bond issues of the City of Cochran. Mr. Newbern explained that Butler/Snow is currently being retained as agent for the City of Cochran on bond issues. Councilman Thrower made a motion and Councilmember Cranford seconded the motion to retain Butler/Snow as agent to prepare the Continuing Disclosure and Annual Report to the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board for the upcoming fiscal year. The motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor.

Item # 4 – Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Appointment of new IDA board member. Mr. Newbern asked Council to make a recommendation to appoint someone to fill the vacancy on the IDA board left by Mr. Ligon. There is 1 ½ years left in his term on the board. Councilmember Lemmon recommended that Andy Patel be appointed to fill the vacancy. Councilmember Thrower made a motion and Councilmember Cranford seconded the motion to appoint Andy Patel to fill the vacancy left by Mr. Logan to the IDA Board. The motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor.

Item # 5 – Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Appointment of new Housing Authority board member for five-year term. Mr. Newbern explained that the term of sitting member, Charles Keen is due to expire. Councilmember Lemmon asked if Charles Keen wanted to renew his term on the board. Mr. Newbern stated that Mr. Keen did want to renew his term. Councilmember Thrower made a motion and Councilmember Lemmon seconded the motion to appoint Charles Keen as Housing Authority Board Member for a new 5-year term. The motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor.

Item # 6 – Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Discuss strategy for spending Road SPLOST. Mr. Newbern asked Jacob Daniels, Public Works Director, to address the Council concerning the Road SPLOST. He explained that \$50,000 of the CDBG Grant would be used to resurface roads in the Railroad Avenue area. The remaining SPLOST funds allocated to road improvements would be used for road resurfacing and road related capital expenditures. Mr. Daniels also presented a quote of \$49,426.38 to the Council for a Ditch-Witch Hydro-Excavator. He explained that this would eliminate the need for 811 locates to be done to mark utility lines/cables. This piece of equipment digs with water and suction and be used to dig around utility lines without damage to them. This type of equipment is also used by other cities such as Macon and Warner Robins. This would be safer and save on repairs of damaged utility lines caused by conventional digging. Councilmember Thrower asked Mr. Newbern if he wanted to go ahead and purchase the hydro-excavator. Councilmember Cranford said the City needed to wait. Council chose to defer discussion until the December 22, 2016 called meeting. Councilmember Lemmon expressed his concern for the resurfacing need of McVay Drive, Crest Drive, and S. 7th Street. Councilmember Cranford added that Dohl Street at Peter Street and Dohl Street to Maple Street also need resurfacing.

Item # 7 - Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Discuss new pouring license fees, guidelines; consider adoption of ordinance. Mr. Newbern advised the Council that Leo Phillips, the City Attorney, is drafting the Alcohol Pouring License Ordinance now and it would be ready for the December 22, 2016 called meeting for their review. He advised that the City already has one vendor who is ready to purchase their pouring license.

Item # 8 – Presented by Fire Chief, Kevin Noles

Update on Fire Department's new ISO rating; update on state grant for safety/training equipment. Chief Noles addressed the Council and updated them on the City of Cochran Emergency Services' new ISO rating of 5. This represents a 2-point improvement on the previous rating of 7. He explained that residents must be in the City to receive insurance benefit from the improved rating. The new ISO rating will go into effect March 1, 2017. Councilmember Gilman asked Chief Noles if the County Fire Department had received their new ISO rating. Chief Noles stated that they had not. Chief Noles also advised Council of the approval of the \$325,000 Grant that the City Fire Department received for the purchase of air-pacs, turn-out gear, and training.

Item # 9 – Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Updates on Council retreat plans; set date for retreat. Mr. Newbern advised Council of the finalization of the dates of January 26, 27, and 28 for the Council Retreat at Little Ocmulgee State Park. He stated that they would be working on an agenda for the retreat and would like to have it ready by the 2nd week in January. The facilitator will be someone from Middle Georgia State College.

Item # 10 – Presented by Public Works Director, Jacob Daniels

Update on Street Sign Project. Mr. Daniels showed Council one of the new signs that will be put up. Middle Georgia Signs will begin the sign replacement project at the first of the year. He stated that every intersection sign in the city limits will be replaced. The project should take about one month to complete. The entire project is being funded by TIA funds. The stop signs will be replaced also.

Item # 11 – Presented by City Clerk, Jill Cooper

Discuss options for tablets for Councilmembers. Mrs. Cooper advised Council of pricing options received from Verizon for tablets for the Council. The 10" Ipad would be \$729.99 and the 10" Samsung would be \$449.99. Council decided to defer further discussion to the retreat in January.

Item # 12 – Presented by City Manager, Richard Newbern

Update Council on plans for Utility Cut-off date on December 27, 2016. Mr. Newbern advised Council that cut-off day would be December 27, 2016 this month and the December billing will go out on December 28, 2016.

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.)

Catherine Guyton requested new striping on all the roads in McVay Heights, both center and roadside striping. Jacob Daniels, Public Works Director stated that striping is charged by the mile and that he would check with Mid-State Striping for pricing.

Chan Jones addressed the drainage issues at the Recreation Department. There has been significant damage and sink holes due to heavy rain and the water draining from Lithonia property. Councilmember Thrower and City Manager Richard Newbern visited the site and surveyed the damage. They will be getting with Bob Brockman, County Commissioner, to develop a plan to repair. Mr. Jones also reported that financially, the Recreation Department has been doing well and that no early draws have been requested. He estimates that the costs to the Recreation Department is \$410.00 per child.

Wiley Hobes addressed the drug problem and drive-by shootings in our community. He said we need to increase law enforcement.

John Ricks asked Council if the City could take down a 5-foot stump in the right-of-way in front of his property. Councilmember Thrower said he would have it taken care of.

Mayor Updates

- No guns on City property. Mayor Ates deferred discussion to called meeting on December 22, 2016.

City Manager Discussion/Items/Updates

- Mr. Newbern announced the called meeting on December 22, 2016.
- The next Chamber meeting will be Wednesday, December 14th at 12:00 pm at Sugarberry's.
- The City Hall office will be closed December 23rd and 26th for the holidays.
- Mr. Newbern will be out of the office on December 27, 2016.
- In the January 2017 Council meeting, the Council will need to appoint a Mayor to fill the vacancy left by Mayor Stoy's resignation. Councilmember Thrower said Council needed to discuss the appointment so they would be prepared to name someone by the next meeting.
- Finance reports were given to Councilmembers. Mr. Newbern thanked the department heads for staying within their department budgets so far. He also stated that the budget process for the next fiscal year would begin in January. Councilmember Gilman asked about the \$250,000 transfer into the General Fund. Mr. Newbern explained that was an interfund transfer to cover operating expenses and is standard practice.
- Mr. Newbern advised Council that a minimum payment of \$70,000 will be paid to our SPLOST fund in January.
- Willie Farrow, Code Enforcement Officer, was asked to give an update on the basketball court construction at the Peyton Williams Center. Mr. Farrow stated that Sam Clarke Construction has completed the grading of the court area and had laid the gravel. They are now waiting for the asphalt to be poured. Electronics Unlimited will begin installation of the security cameras by the end of the week. He and law enforcement will have wi-fi access to the cameras. Councilmember Lemmon asked when the kids could begin to play on the courts and Mr. Farrow estimated 2 weeks.

Department updates.

Department Reports. Police Chief Coley updated Council on the new TRIP program. It has been implemented and their office sent out 250 collection letters for unpaid fines due in excess of \$136,000. They were able to go back 4 ½ years. The three new police vehicles have arrived. Officer Tracy Hernandez has been hired and that leaves one vacancy to fill. Chief Coley asked for prayers for all officers as there has been a 200% increase in murders of police officers with a total of 8 killed in the line of duty in Georgia this year. Councilmember Thrower asked if the police department had sufficient tactical gear and ballistic shields. Mayor Ates asked if all officers had bullet-proof vests. Chief Coley stated that he has replaced 8 vests through a FEMA grant. He also encouraged prayer for the Fire Department as well. He commended Officer Josh Nobles for his actions regarding a downed power line in the city. Councilmember Gilman expressed his concern about the location of the City limits signs and by whose authorization the DOT moved them. Councilmember Thrower and Chief Coley stated that the State determined radar ranges on state routes and that could have been a factor. Mayor Ates asked Chief Coley to follow up with Mr. Willie Hobes.

Fire Chief Noles stated he had no additional comments to his report.

Public Works Director had no additional comments to his reports. Councilmember Gilman questioned the need to hire a new meter reader. Topic was deferred to closed discussion.

Council Discussion Items

Mayor Ates and Councilmember Thrower expressed concern for the safety of the customer service clerks at City Hall. City Clerk Jill Cooper will get some pricing on providing protective glass and safer customer service stations.

Councilmember Thrower made a motion and Councilmember Gooch made a motion to go into Executive Session. The motion passed unanimously with all voting in favor.

Adjourn @ 11: 05

Jill Cooper, City Clerk

(Seal)