

MINUTES

FORSYTH CITY COUNCIL MEETING

FEBRUARY 5, 2013

CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION

Mayor Howard called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Melton then gave the invocation.

ROLL CALL

Present for the meeting was Mayor John Howard, Councilmembers Mike Dodd, Jo Anna Banks, James Calloway, Desi Hansford, Eric Wilson, and Melvin Lawrence. Also present was City Attorney, Bobby Melton; City Administrator, Thomas White; and City Clerk, Janice Hall.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 15, 2013 COUNCIL MEETING

Mr. Wilson offered a motion to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2013 council meeting as written. Seconded by Mrs. Banks the motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Banks, Calloway, Hansford, Wilson, and Lawrence).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 29, 2013 CALLED COUNCIL MEETING

Mr. Hansford offered a motion to approve the minutes of the January 29, 2013 called council meeting as written. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence, the motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Banks, Calloway, Hansford, Wilson, and Lawrence).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 1, 2013 CALLED COUNCIL MEETING

Mrs. Banks offered a motion to approve the minutes from the February 1, 2013 called council meeting as written. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Banks, Calloway, Hansford, Wilson, and Lawrence).

PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED 2013 BUDGET AND ADOPTION OF 2013 BUDGET

Mayor Howard opened the public hearing for comments for or against the adoption of the 2013 budget. Mr. Melton reminded council this would be the last public hearing concerning the 2013 budget. The first public hearing was held on January 29, 2013 after being properly advertised in the reporter. Mr. Wilson noted the public is questioning the raises to employees during the current economic situation. Mayor Howard stated the increase is a 3% COLA, reminding council the city employees had not received a raise since 2010 although the cost of living has continued to rise. Mayor Howard stated city employees deserved an increase in pay and council should show gratitude toward the employees for their hard work. Mr. Calloway reminded council that the city dropped one prison crew to help with this cost, while Mrs. Banks reminded council that the employees' take home pay had decreased with the 2% increase to social security. Mrs. Banks asked if the budget could be adopted before approving the Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) increase and Mrs. Hall reviewed that most cities change their PCA on a monthly basis according to

the bill received from MEAG. Mrs. Hall stated that the 1¢ PCA increase is in the proposed budget figures and will be approved with the budget approval. Mrs. Hall reviewed the average residential consumption according to ECG is 950kw and a 1¢ PCA will increase this average bill by approximately \$10 per month. Mr. Wilson stated he was displeased to increase the rate while nothing had been done about the cable and council had failed at the attempt to sell the cable. Mr. Calloway reminded council the cable will be paid for in one year. Mayor Howard stated MEAG raising rates each year and we must keep up with what it cost to operate. Mr. Wilson stated he would have preferred to see cuts rate rather than increasing any rates. Mr. Lawrence commented that the city is still competitively priced with other areas.

Hearing no further comments for or against the adoption of the 2013 budget, Mayor Howard closed the public hearing. Mr. Hansford offered a motion to adopt the 2013 budget. Seconded by Mr. Calloway, the motion carried with a vote of four (4) for (Banks, Calloway, Hansford, and Lawrence) and two (2) against (Dodd and Wilson).

APPROVAL TO ADVERTISE ORDINANCE REGARDING EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Mr. Wilson offered a motion to approve the advertising of the emergency management ordinance. Mr. Hansford seconded the motion. Mr. Wilson explained that this was an oversight from last year as the public safety committee had reviewed this and thought that it had come before council for approval. The motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Banks, Calloway, Hansford, Wilson, and Lawrence).

UPDATE ON HARDIN EASEMENT

Mr. White informed council that while constructing the South Interceptor Line under Highway 42 on Hardin's property, the contractor hit rock and they now need to change the route as well as the easement path. The Hardin's are working with the city to get this change made. The Hardin's have requested a driveway permit in exchange for the easement and Mr. White is waiting on the DOT to approve the driveway. DOT did review the request today and should approve quickly. Mr. Melton stressed the urgency of getting this approved.

2013 BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Mr. White reported that he had spoken to all members of each board and that all are willing to be reappointed. There are two vacancies – one on the Historic Preservation Commission to replace Mr. Sewell and the other on the Planning and Zoning Board to replace Mr. Bennett. Mr. Wilson offered a motion to reappoint all those willing to serve another term and to have names to fill the two vacancies at the next meeting. Mr. Calloway seconded the motion. Mr. Wilson stated that this appointment was to include the Housing Authority. Mayor Howard asked Mrs. Hall to clarify the DDA board terms. Mrs. Hall informed the council that State law states that DDA board members should serve a term of 4 years, but the current city ordinance states board members will serve a term of 6 years. Mr. Melton will

research this and determine if the city ordinance is in fact in conflict with State law. Mr. Lawrence stated this appointment should include Mrs. Banks to the Tree Board. The motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Banks, Calloway, Hansford, Wilson, and Lawrence).

APPROVAL TO ADVERTISE VARIANCE REQUEST FOR LINWOOD HART – SIDE SETBACK REQUIREMENTS

Mrs. Hall reviewed that this matter has been heard by the Planning & Zoning Board and they recommend approval. Mrs. Hall stated this is before council tonight just to approve the advertisement for a public hearing. Mr. Hansford offered a motion to approve advertisement on the variance request for Linwood Hart. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence, the motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Banks, Calloway, Hansford, Wilson, and Lawrence).

APPROVAL TO ADVERTISE VARIANCE REQUEST FOR JAMES GREEN – USED CAR SALES IN NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPPING DISTRICT

Mrs. Hall reviewed that this matter has been heard by the Planning & Zoning Board and they recommend approval. Mrs. Hall stated this is before council tonight just to approve the advertisement for a public hearing. Mr. Hansford offered a motion to approve advertisement on the variance request for James Green. Seconded by Lawrence, the motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Banks, Calloway, Hansford, Wilson, and Lawrence).

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF UPDATED PRICING FOR SHARP STREET SEWER LINE PROJECT

Mr. White reviewed that the project was on hold to obtain all easements. Mr. White stated the bids were open in 2012, but were only good for 60 days. The updated pricing shows an increase of \$5,910.00 over original bid. Mr. Calloway offered a motion to approve the pricing for the Sharp Street Sewer Line Project. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Banks, Calloway, Hansford, Wilson, and Lawrence).

PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION ON REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Mayor Howard opened the public hearing for comments for or against the adoption of the Urban Redevelopment Plan. Mr. Robert Smith, Middle Georgia Regional Commission, stated the intent of the Public Hearing was to receive public input on the resolution on the Urban Redevelopment Plan (URP). The city adopted the URP in 2010 and amended the plan in 2011. Mr. Smith stated this resolution will allow for a better economic development opportunity and interest has been shown by developers for these areas. Mr. White stated the city has been working on this for some time and will help investors. Mr. Smith reminded council this would include 29 parcels and will include tax credits for developers on these properties. Hearing no further comments for or against the URP, Mayor Howard closed the public hearing. Mr. Wilson offered a motion to approve the resolution and amend the URP to include the 29

new parcels. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence, the motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Banks, Calloway, Hansford, Wilson, and Lawrence).

APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE INVOICES

Mrs. Hall stated that the spreadsheet before council tonight lists all PO's entered from the last council meeting through today. Mrs. Hall stated that only two of those PO's is over \$5,000 and require council approval. Total PO's for approval is \$15,957.75. Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the PO's. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence, the motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Banks, Calloway, Hansford, Wilson, and Lawrence).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

MR. DODD

Mr. Dodd informed council he met with Mrs. Banks last week and will continue to work on updating the zoning map.

Mr. Dodd also reviewed ownership of Lee Street Park stating that when the Welcome Center building was renovated the city deeded the property to the DDA including the park. On the tax digest, the property is listed as being owned by Georgia Power and this needs to be cleared up. Mr. Melton reviewed that MEAG Quit Claimed the property to the City some time back.

Mr. Dodd stated the Kiwanis Club and toured the new county building. Mr. Dodd commended the county commission on a job well done.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to present Grits Café with a resolution for the work to rebuild their business after it was destroyed by fire. Mr. Hansford seconded the motion. Mr. Dodd then amended the motion to make the city a part of a joint resolution from all government entities. Seconded by Mr. Hansford, the amendment carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Banks, Calloway, Hansford, Wilson, and Lawrence).

MRS. BANKS

Mrs. Banks announced Arbor Day is on February 15th. The Tree Board will be at Monroe County Bank and Farmers Bank from 9:00AM until 12:00PM handing out free trees. At 2:00PM at Country Club Park, a tree will be planted and the Arbor Day Proclamation will be read.

There will be a Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery Committee meeting on February 6, 2013 at 10:00AM. Committee meeting will start at Kynette Park; then return to City Hall for the business meeting.

Mrs. Banks met with the playground representatives to get a feel for projects that could be accomplished this year. Mrs. Banks will meet February 12th with Kids Play to review some recreation alternatives.

The National Guard has a fence around their area at the City Park and would like trees planted to buffer the property from the city park

Mrs. Banks reviewed the need for security camera at Kynette and Country Club Parks.

Mrs. Banks will be in contact with Mrs. Rosemary Walker to discuss summer camps and will ask her to make a presentation to the committee.

Mayor Howard suggested accomplish all that can be accomplished at Kynette Park, then move to working on Country Club Park. Mrs. Banks believes maintenance will be very important.

MR. CALLOWAY

Mr. Calloway will call committee meeting soon.

MR. HANSFORD

Mr. Hansford will call a committee meeting soon now that the 2013 budget has been set.

MR. WILSON

Mr. Wilson announced there would be a Public Works Committee meeting on February 8, 2013 at 10:00AM.

The Public Hearing for the privatization of garbage will be held at the next city council meeting in 2 weeks.

Mr. Wilson commended Mayor Howard on the Mayor Gala to gain money for the youth.

MR. LAWRENCE

Mr. Lawrence discussed the need for back up batteries for the weather sirens.

Mr. Lawrence announced there would be a Public Safety Committee meeting next week.

Mr. Lawrence commended the fire and police chiefs for keeping him informed as to what is going on in the community.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Mr. White informed council the Railroad Avenue survey was complete and sent to Norfolk Southern. The next step is to wait for approval from Norfolk, then to make proposal for easement. Mr. Dodd stated this project had been in the works for over 4 years and is in need of a resolution. Mr. Wilson requested to meet with Mr. Dodd and Mr. White to get up to speed with the project and determine the reasoning for such a long process. Mr. Melton stated he had worked to put together a package for the Railroad of everything they had requested. Mayor Howard offered to work closely with Mr. White to resolve the situation

Mr. Wilson offered a motion to move \$30,000.00 from recreation prison crew to the street department. Seconded by Mr. Calloway the motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Banks, Calloway, Hansford, Wilson, and Lawrence).

CITY CLERK REPORT

Mrs. Hall had nothing further to report.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

Mr. Melton requested council accept the easement for Sharp Street. Mr. Calloway offered a motion to accept the easement for Sharp Street. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Banks, Calloway, Hansford, Wilson, and Lawrence).

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Howard stated with the budget passing, there may be some question about a 3% pay increase to all employees but stated that he feels that the employees work hard and deserve to be rewarded with a pay increase. The department heads will need to hold their employees accountable.

Mayor Howard stated that Council has done all they can do to try to sell the cable. Meetings have been requested with both Cox and Charter, but neither has responded to the request.

Mayor Howard requested that the committees hold retreats with him to review a plan of action for the committee and iron-out any differences.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

Mr. Wilson offered a motion to advertise to make Lovers Lane, from Jones to Jackson, a one-way street. Seconded by Mrs. Banks, the motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Banks, Calloway, Hansford, Wilson, and Lawrence).

Mayor Howard reviewed the Classic Social and Savings Club interest in raising money for the children of the community. They would like to raise money and donate the funds to Better Hometown, a 501(c) (3), so they may purchase a building for a youth center. Mayor Howard would like to hold a Mayor's Gala each year he is in office to raise this money. This year's Mayor's Gala is scheduled for November 9, 2013.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Hansford offered a motion to adjourn into executive session to discuss pending litigation. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence, the motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Banks, Calloway, Hansford, Wilson, and Lawrence) and council adjourned into executive session at 7:20PM.

Mayor Howard called the meeting back to open session at 8:20PM.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Submitted by:

Janice L. Hall, City Clerk