

MINUTES

FORSYTH CITY COUNCIL MEETING

JUNE 3, 2014

CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND INVOCATION

Mayor Howard called the meeting to order at 6 PM, and lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Jones gave the invocation.

ROLL CALL

Present for the meeting were Mayor John Howard, Councilmembers Mike Dodd, Greg Goolsby, Jimmy Jones, Eric Wilson, and Melvin Lawrence. Also present were City Attorney, Bobby Melton; City Administrator, Thomas White; and City Clerk, Janice Hall.

Councilman Stroud was unable to attend the meeting; therefore, all unanimous votes will be five (5) votes for (Dodd, Goolsby, Jones, Wilson, and Lawrence).

COUNCIL ACTION ITEMS:

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MAY 20, 2014 COUNCIL MEETING

Mr. Wilson offered a motion to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2014 council meeting. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence, the motion carried unanimously.

2. PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE SALE OF BEER AND WINE PACKAGE LICENSE AT 37 SOUTH JACKSON STREET – APPLICANT SOHEL BATLIWALA

Mayor Howard opened the public hearing for comments for or against the approval of the beer and wine package license for 37 South Jackson Street, applicant Soheli Batliwala. Mr. Melton reviewed the application; this first came before council on May 6th; included with the application is a letter from a surveyor certifying the location is not near a school or church, the property lease, and the fingerprint report; this has been properly advertised in the May 21 and 28 issues of the Reporter.

Hearing no additional comments for or against the approval of the application, Mayor Howard closed the public hearing. Mr. Wilson offered a motion to approve the beer and wine package license application for 37 S. Jackson Street and Mr. Jones seconded the motion. Mr. Goolsby asked if there is a conflict with the location as it is beside the commission building where voting is held. Mr. Melton stated that the

commission building is not a polling place for Election Day, only used for early voting and the law states Election Day. Mr. Melton stated that in his opinion there is not a conflict. The motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative was Dodd, Goolsby, Jones, Wilson, and Lawrence).

3. APPOINT VOTING DELEGATE FOR MEAG POWER ANNUAL ELECTION AT ANNUAL MEETING IN JULY – CURRENTLY MAYOR HOWARD IS VOTING DELEGATE AND MIKE DODD IS ALTERNATE

Mr. Jones stated that Mr. Lawrence is the chair of the public utilities committee. Mayor Howard stated that he has been the voting delegate for the last two years. Mr. Dodd stated that he has previously been the voting delegate and is currently the alternate. Mr. Goolsby stated that he has a problem with the conference in general and the need for all to attend especially since we are on a tight budget that this conference is right after the GMA conference. Mr. Goolsby stated that the perception does not look good when all attend every conference. Mr. Lawrence stated that he read Mr. Goolsby's email regarding this and his opinion but he has spoken with Mr. Paul Warfel, Meag representative, and he feels that all that can attend should attend to get the information that will be presented. Mr. Wilson offered a motion to leave Mayor Howard as the voting delegate and Mr. Dodd as the alternate. Seconded by Mr. Jones, the motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative was Dodd, Goolsby, Jones, Wilson, and Lawrence).

4. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE INVOICES

Mrs. Hall reviewed invoice totals for each department for a total of \$376,570.05 for general payables and \$10,846.10 for SPLOST payables. Mr. Jones offered a motion to approve the invoices and Mr. Lawrence seconded the motion. Mr. Goolsby stated that the headlines in last week's paper stated that the city is broke and asked Mrs. Hall to review why no invoices were presented for payment at the last council meeting. Mrs. Hall reviewed what is meant by the daily balance that she refers to, stating that this figure includes all bank drafts that will come out at the end of the month regardless of the date of the daily balance. The motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative was Dodd, Goolsby, Jones, Wilson, and Lawrence).

a. Williams Communications – radio purchase order - \$139,296.63

Mrs. Hall stated that this purchase was approved at the last council meeting but the purchase order was not in the system at that time and asked that the purchase order be approved just as a formality. Mrs. Hall stated this will be a SPLOST purchase. Mr. Wilson offered a motion to approve the purchase order for the radio purchase. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative was Dodd, Goolsby, Jones, Wilson, and Lawrence).

ADDITIONAL COUNCIL ITEMS:

5. CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Mr. White offered the following report:

- Reviewed travel voucher request for Dodd, Stroud, Wilson, Lawrence, Howard, and himself for the GMA convention in Savannah in June. Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the travel request. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence, the motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative was Dodd, Goolsby, Jones, Wilson, and Lawrence).
- Reviewed department head changes that the respective committees have reviewed; salary changes for Steve Jones and Steve Sikes as they are going from hourly to salary, title change for Johnny Hodges to electric department head, and title change for Alvin Randall to public utilities director. Mr. Jones offered a motion to approve the changes as submitted and Mr. Lawrence seconded the motion. Mr. Wilson asked if these have been reviewed by the appropriate committees and Mr. White stated that they have. Mr. Dodd stated that these are significant salary changes for the two from hourly to salary and asked for an explanation and Mr. White stated that both received overtime and on call pay so their time was averaged out to an annual salary and that there will not be an increase in the annual pay or budget. The motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative was Dodd, Goolsby, Jones, Wilson, and Lawrence).

6. CITY CLERK REPORT

- Notification of public hearing for rezoning request from Otis Ingram for 57 Brooklyn Avenue

- First issue of the newsletter was included in the bills that went out on Friday. Mrs. Hall asked for input from elected officials and the public as to the content of the newsletter.
- Financial Disclosure Reports are due to Mrs. Hall by the end of June and she must submit reports to the Ethics Commission by the end of July

7. CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

Mr. Melton reviewed the advertising dates for the public hearing for the rezoning matter for Mr. Otis Ingram for 57 Brooklyn Avenue.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Parks/Recreation/Cemetery Committee

Mr. Dodd stated that a committee meeting has not been held yet. Mr. Dodd asked Mr. White for an update on information requested from the Regional Commission and Mr. White stated that he has not yet received the information; the water feature with the county is on the back burner but there are other areas in the parks that need improvement; applying for a Trail Grant for Country Club park; also need to look at filling in the old pool at Country Club park due to the danger it presents and needs to be demolished to be safe area. Mr. Lawrence asked if the water fountain at Kynette Park has been installed and Mr. White stated that he thought there was a fountain at the basketball courts but will check to make sure.

Public Affairs Committee

Mr. Goolsby reviewed the DDA board meeting and stated that the DDA has formed an advisory committee with eight citizens on the committee.

Administrative Committee

Mr. Jones stated that interviews were held for the city attorney position and the committee is in the process of reviewing the results for final interviews before full council. Mr. Jones stated that the committee is waiting on several items from the Regional Commission.

Public Works Committee

Mr. Wilson reviewed the committee meeting held yesterday and most pressing issue was the debris pickup and grapple truck use; will have additional discussion and public input; grapple truck needs \$10,000 in repairs and cost to run the truck annually

is approximately \$35,000; and will hold next committee meeting on June 30th at 8:00 am. Mayor Howard stated that he would like to hear from the citizens as to what they would like the city to do for debris pickup.

Public Utilities Committee

Mr. Lawrence reviewed projects in progress:

- Streetscape Phase III has environmental impact study in progress and next step will be construction easements
- South Interceptor Line work has restarted
- Railroad Avenue project is 90% complete
- Rest Haven Inert Landfill is 99% complete
- I75 lights in process of obtaining informal quotes
- Tractor Supply road relocation is complete. Mr. Dodd asked when the sidewalk will be completed and Mr. White stated that he would need to get a status. Mr. Dodd stated that the sidewalk in the area that was previously the roadway needs to be installed.
- Mr. Dodd asked status of sidewalk on Railroad Avenue and Mr. Wilson stated that Mr. Randall reported in the committee meeting yesterday that the Department of Corrections should have started work yesterday on the sidewalks.
- Mr. Goolsby stated that Mrs. Khoury has a diagram for a walking area from Harris Street to Kimball Street on Main Street where the sidewalk does not exist and cannot be installed. Mr. Wilson stated that this was also discussed at yesterday's committee meeting and the committee agreed that the plan was good and saw no reason why we should not move forward. Mr. Wilson stated that the committee also discussed beautification around the square and the need to remove the boulders on the corner of Main and Lee Streets.

9. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Howard stated that he needs the evaluations back from council on Mr. White.

Mayor Howard stated that he will call a work session soon to discuss goals for the year.

10. ADDITIONAL COUNCIL BUSINESS

Mr. White stated that he delivered the form to Mr. James Green for the commemorative naming of Harris Street.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – (MAYOR HOWARD TO REVIEW RULES FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS)

11. ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. James Lyons, 865 Montpelier Road, came before council and stated that discussion tonight regarding sidewalks and the sidewalk on Sharp Street was torn up months ago and still has not been replaced. Mr. Lyons stated that the pipe is stopped up and the corner of Kynette Street and Parson Street and is washing out the driveway. Mr. Lyons stated that the pipe is too small; Mr. White will handle. Mr. Lyons stated that it is embarrassing to have it in the paper that the city is broke. Mr. Lawrence stated that the paper misinterpreted the information and Mr. Lyons stated that it was not misinterpreted.

Mr. Ronald Bearden, 441 Sunset Terrace, came before council stating that the large rocks on the square need to be moved; the section of street was used by the truckers when turning prior to the bumpouts being installed; and the city should be responsible for damage to any vehicle caused by the rocks. Mr. Bearden stated that he wished the city had not changed the garbage pickup as we had a good service and could have just changed to one day per week pickup; put grapple truck back in service and charge everybody an additional \$5 per month; and originally Advance Disposal was going to provide a grapple truck for the debris pickup. Mayor Howard stated that public hearings were held prior to privatizing and no one attended the meetings but now everyone wants to complain about the change. Mr. Bearden stated that council preaches about the need for jobs but did away with several employees. Mr. Dodd stated that regulations have changed and the city has nowhere to put the debris. Mr. Wilson stated that he would like to eliminate the property tax and cannot if services provided to do pay for themselves.

Ms. Tonya Welch, 133 Lakeside, came before council and stated that the cable boxes that she has do not work, the trash service is awful, and it takes months for leaves and limbs to be picked up. Ms. Welch stated that there is a vacant lot beside her property and others dump on the vacant lot but no one picks it up. Ms. Welch stated that the

city did a wonderful job when picking up trash and limbs. Mayor Howard stated that we are currently in negotiations regarding the sale of the cable system and should know something by the end of the month. Mayor Howard stated that the wished more people had come to the public hearing to say they would pay more to keep the garbage service as council felt they were doing the citizens justice to save money by privatizing the garbage service. Mr. Wilson stated that we need to pass cost of services along to the citizens but asked if it is fair for those that do not have yards to pay the same as those that do. Mr. James Lyons came forward again and asked if people are not coming forward, why not get the word out better. Mayor Howard stated that we try to get the word out as much as possible. Mr. Jones stated that information could be included in the newsletter with the utility bills and Mrs. Hall stated that she will include a survey in the next issue.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Submitted by:

Janice L. Hall, City Clerk