

MINUTES

FORSYTH CITY COUNCIL CALLED MEETING

SEPTEMBER 8, 2014

CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND INVOCATION

Mayor Howard, called the meeting to order at 9:00AM.

ROLL CALL

Present for the meeting were Mayor John Howard, Councilmembers Mike Dodd, Julius Stroud, Greg Goolsby, Jimmy Jones, and Eric Wilson. Also present were City Attorney, Bobby Melton; City Clerk/Administrator, Janice Hall; and Administrative Assistant, Stacy Ladson.

1. REVIEW OF FORM OF GOVERNMENT FACILITATED BY MIDDLE GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

Ms. Laura Mathis and Mr. Robert Smith from the Middle Georgia Regional Commission requested Council's opinion to Forsyth's change in government. Mrs. Mathis stated to change the form of government would require a charter amendment and approval by Legislature. After hearing from each Council member and the Mayor, the general synopsis was for a change to a City Manager form of government. The City Manager would be over day to day operations, the hiring and firing of department heads, and handling of the budget. This form of government would allow for less overlay and confusion between Mayor and the Administrator. Currently the Mayor is considered the "CEO" of the City, however, is also only a part-time position. This may also allow council to meet less, while still passing legislation. The Manager, along with the Clerk and Attorney, would still be hired by Council. Council members also discussed changing the election process from at large majority to having posts along with term limits. Mrs. Mathis stated the change in the charter regarding government could be ready to send to Legislature by the end of the year and could take affect once it is approved. Mrs. Hall asked if the post system was approved would it take affect right away as well. Mr. Melton stated the City could set an effective date in legislation. Mrs. Mathis stated she and Mr. Smith would take the information Council provided, conduct further research, and return in early October with a proposal.

RECESS

Mr. Stroud requested a brief recess and it was seconded by Mr. Wilson. The motion carried unanimously and was the meeting was recessed at 9:43AM.

Mayor Howard called the meeting back to order at 10:52AM.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Jones offered a motion to go into executive session to discuss the sale and/or lease of property. Seconded by Mr. Stroud, the motion carried unanimously and council adjourn into executive session at 9:52AM.

Mayor Howard called meeting back into open session at 10:23AM.

2. REVIEW OF PROPOSAL RECEIVED FROM THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REGARDING RESTRUCTURING OF CHAMBER

Mrs. Hall reviewed the proposal presented by Mr. Bazemore at the joint meeting, noting it was different from what the study group had decided to propose. The proposal was for Council to contract with the Chamber of Commerce for Main Street, Tourism, and Downtown Development Authority in the amount of 85% of the Hotel/Motel tax collected annually (approx. \$238,000). Mayor Howard suggested the City start its own Tourism Department. Mrs. Khoury stated the City can do that by either creating a Convention and Visitors Bureau or changing the Main Street designation from a 501(c)3 to 501(c)6; noting however, if Main Street changes from a (c)3 it would no longer be eligible for many grants. Mr. Stroud stated the 85% was a hard sale for him because that was a lot of money by giving to an experiment and the City would have the most to lose. Mr. Wilson agreed stating the City could lose control over some of its functions if they were to just contract everything out to another group. Mr. Wilson also commented on the fact that the City would only have advisory vote, that the Chamber would make the ultimate decision. Mrs. Hall clarified this proposal was not in response to a lack of communication, but because the Chamber of Commerce had some vacancies within its office and was looking to reorganize and join efforts. Mr. Wilson stated he thought this would only bring more government into the Chamber only hurting their core. Mr. Dodd commended the group for their research, but disagreed with the proposal. He also stated something needed to be done as Forsyth is not growing. Mrs. Khoury stated the responsibility of how the Hotel/Motel tax was spent was held by the City, even if they contract with another entity to carry it out. Mr. Wilson offered a motion to disapprove the proposal to contract with the Chamber for Main Street, Tourism, and Downtown Development Authority at the cost of 85% of the Hotel/Motel tax. Seconded by Mr. Stroud, the motion carried unanimously.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS:

Mrs. Hall will work with Mayor Howard to plan a called meeting with Mr. Daryl Ingram from Electric Cities of Georgia.

Mrs. Hall will look over the contract between the City and the Chamber concerning tourism and report back the details to Council.

Mr. Dodd inquired whether the RFP for an Administrator should be advertised or if Council should wait until legislation passed to advertise for a Manager. Mayor Howard stated the RFP he and Mrs. Hall were working on would accommodate a change in the charter, so after the Administrator was hired and legislation passed, this person would just have a change in title. Mrs. Hall agreed she would be willing to serve as Interim Administrator as long as Council was actively looking for someone to fulfil the position. Mr. Wilson offered a motion for Mrs. Hall to serve as Interim Administrator until at least April 1, 2015. Seconded by Mr. Goolsby, the motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN

The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 10:57AM.

Submitted by:

Stacy Ladson, Administrative Assistant