

## **MINUTES**

### **FORSYTH CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**OCTOBER 7, 2014**

#### **CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND INVOCATION**

Mayor Howard called the meeting to order at 6:00PM, and lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Lawrence gave the invocation.

#### **ROLL CALL**

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

#### **COUNCIL ACTION ITEMS:**

##### **1. RECONVENE SEPTEMBER 16, 2014 COUNCIL MEETING**

Mayor Howard explained the September 16, 2014 council meeting was recessed until this date, October 7, 2014, due to the tragedy concerning Deputy Michael Norris. The public hearing scheduled to take place at the September meeting would be opened for discussion on tonight.

##### **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Wilson offered a motion to approve the minutes from the September 2, 2014; September 8, 2014; September 16, 2014; and September 29, 2014 council meetings. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence, the motion carried with five voting in the affirmative. (Mr. Stroud abstained from voting as he was absent from the September 29, 2014 council meeting.)

##### **3. RECOMMENDATION FROM COMMITTEE REGARDING TOURISM/HOTEL TAX**

Mr. Goolsby reminded council of the September 29<sup>th</sup> called meeting when they approved the 2014 contract with the Chamber of Commerce for tourism. During the decision, Council felt they did not have enough information to make a decision regarding the contract for 2015, and referred the question to the Public Relations Committee. Mr. Goolsby stated the committee met on October 6, 2014 to discuss the three options for tourism moving forward: 1. Continue to contract with the Chamber of Commerce; 2. Contract with another 501(c)6, including designating Main Street as such; and 3. To create a City Convention and Visitors Bureau. It was recommended by the committee members for the City to create a new CVB and use the DDA Board to create the CVB bylaws.

Mr. Brad Edenfield, Forsyth-Monroe Chamber of Commerce Chair, asked Council to consider contracting with the Chamber in 2015 noting the past successes of the program. Mr.

Edenfield stated the Chamber has been contracted with the past 15 plus years for tourism efforts; in this time they have designated the county as a Camera Ready community, designed and distributed brochures advertising Juliette, Culloden, Bolingbroke, and High Falls, designed and maintained the tourism website middleofeverywhere.com, as well as organized and operated 2 of the top 20 tourism events in the southeast named by the Southeast Tourism Society. Mr. Edenfield stated he and the members of the Chamber are non-bias and only want to see what is best for Forsyth and Monroe County. He stated terminating the contract would mean the City would be going backward as it would be starting all over and this would only feed the reputation that the community leaders cannot work together. In response, Mr. Jones thanked Mr. Edenfield for his work, but noting at the joint meeting with Chamber, Development Authorities, Council and Commission, the discussion for over an hour was noting why the entities needed to make a change, and now he was asking Council not to make a change. Mr. Jones stated the City has the largest stake in the game because if tourism was not carried out correctly the City would be liable, not whoever they contracted with. Mr. Jones added he was greatly concerned that the restricted 40% was being spent to advertise outside of city limits and by law could not be used that way. Mr. Edenfield stated the structure previously proposed from the Chamber was considered to be more efficient, by removing 2 employees from the City and more cohesion between Main Street, Chamber, Tourism, and Development Authorities. The Chamber is still looking forward and considering 2015, although 2014 has not been settled. Mr. Goolsby stated the 2014 contract had been taken care of on the City side. Mrs. Tiffany Andrews, Chamber of Commerce and Development Authority CEO, stated she disagreed with the comment regard the money being spent outside of the City, noting the money by law had to be spent to attract people from 50 miles outside the City. Mr. Melton stated that was correct, however, the money should be spent to advertise Forsyth – not all other cities with the county. Mr. Melton noted the Hotel/Motel tax was generated inside city limits and that is where tourism dollars should be advertising. Mrs. Andrews stated the point of the tax dollars was to put heads in beds and the money should be spent throughout the county to bring visitors to stay in Forsyth. Mrs. Andrews continued by stating the Council should look at the big picture; Juliette’s movie set and High Fall State Park bring in visitors every year from all over, whereas Forsyth is not considered a destination. Mayor Howard thanked Mr. Edenfield and Mrs. Andrews for their work up to this point, but stated the biggest problem he saw with the previous proposal was the City was asked for more money than any other entity involved. Mrs. Andrews stated it was perceived that way because the city would have been given more money than other entities, however most of that money was already designated for the project and the city would really only be reallocating funds. The Chamber and

County also agreed to put more money in than what was previously offered. Mr. Goolsby served on the committee for a hybrid form of organization and was completely in favor of the project until it was presented as something to be placed under the Chamber. Mr. Goolsby stated in the meetings, Mrs. Hall even told the committee if the proposal was for all entities to be under control of the Chamber of Commerce it would fail when it reached Council, which he believed everyone understood and agreed upon. The proposal was altered however, and the night of the joint meeting Mr. Goolsby stated he was made to look like an idiot. Mrs. Andrews stated there was some disconnect, but she hoped after council disapproved of the proposal Council would consider to continue the conversation. Mr. Goolsby stated that proposal failed and now Council was looking forward and considering where to go for 2015. Mayor Howard called for the question, and the motion for the City of Forsyth to create a CVB and use the DDA Board to create the bylaws carried unanimously.

#### **4. APPROVAL OF REQUEST FROM PRISCILLA DOSTER FOR SESQUICENTENNIAL WALKING TOUR OF CITY CEMETERY FOR APRIL 25, 2015**

Mrs. Doster approached Council for approval to close the streets within the City Cemetery on April 25, 2015 for a walking tour. The event is presented by Cabiness Unit 145 Daughters of the Confederacy to celebrate the sesquicentennial and to raise funds for a marker. The group is working with the Monroe County Historical Society to identify historical markers and are planning an interactive tour. Mrs. Doster also stated she and her husband are creating a map of the cemetery with notes to who is buried at which stone. Mr. Dodd stated there is currently a map of the plots, but some information was lost a long time ago and he hoped she and the City could work together. Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the street closure. Seconded by Mr. Jones, the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Doster also asked Council for their support and assistance at the November 11<sup>th</sup> Veterans Memorial Association event. Mr. Wilson offered a motion to assist again this year as in the past. Seconded by Mr. Jones, the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Doster provided Council members with a report provided by Riveredge Behavioral Health and asked they assist in educating the public regarding the services they offer.

#### **5. PUBLIC HEARING FOR JOSEPH EGLOFF AS REPRESENTATIVE FOR DR. CARMINE ODDIS (CARO PROPERTIES LLC) FOR A VARIANCE TO ALLOW THE GRAZING OF LIVESTOCK ON PROPERTY – MAP 53 PARCEL 48 ON JULIETTE ROAD CONTAINING 77.65 ACRES**

Mr. Melton reviewed the variance application for Mr. Egloff to graze cattle on a property currently zoned planned urban development and owned by Dr. Oddis. Mr. Melton noted the

property was never developed as anticipated; however, this variance would not change the zoning for future uses. Mayor Howard opened the public hearing for comments for or against the approval of the variance. Mr. Egloff stated he is working with Dr. Oddis and plans to purchase the property, however, at the time of erecting a fence was not aware of the zoning as it has always been used as agricultural. Mr. Melton agreed noting the City annexed the property in 2005. Mr. Egloff stated that he will graze 20 to 25 cattle, will purchase water from the city, and the cattle will not drink from the stream on the property as he fenced that area off when he erected the new fence. Mayor Howard reviewed one letter written in opposition of the variance. Hearing no further comments for or against the variance, Mayor Howard closed the public hearing. Mr. Jones offered a motion to approve the variance and the motion was seconded by Mr. Dodd. Mr. Dodd stated he would like to add that this variance is only for Dr. Oddis as owner of the property and Mr. Egloff leasing said property. Mr. Wilson amended the motion by adding the variance only apply to the property if owned by Dr. Oddis or Mr. Egloff, therefore they are not interfering with the potential sell. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **6. PUBLIC HEARING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE WITH REGARD TO THE NAMING, RENAMING, OR OTHER DESIGNATION OF CITY PROPERTIES AND FACILITIES**

Mr. Melton reviewed the proposed ordinance, noting the public hearing was originally scheduled for September 16<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Howard opened the public hearing for comments for or against the proposed ordinance. Hearing no comments, Mayor Howard closed the public hearing. Mr. Wilson offered a motion to approve the ordinance. Seconded by Mr. Stroud, the motion carried unanimously.

#### **7. PUBLIC HEARING FOR AMENDMENTS TO THE UTILITIES CODE CHAPTER 23**

Mr. Melton stated the amendment to the utilities code had also been advertised for the required amount of time and should have been heard at the September 16<sup>th</sup> council meeting. Mayor Howard opened the public hearing for comments for or against approval of the proposed amendments. Mrs. Hall reviewed each proposed amendment. After a lengthy discussion, Mr. Goolsby recommended the cut off dates be changed to the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> rather than the proposed 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. Hearing no further comments, Mayor Howard closed the public hearing. Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the amendments. Seconded by Mr. Stroud, the motion carried unanimously.

**8. ACCEPTANCE OF EASEMENT FROM JAMES GREEN**

Mr. Melton stated the easement provides for the relocation of a guide wire on Mr. James Greens' property. Mr. Wilson offered a motion to accept the easement. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously.

**9. APPOINT VOTING DELEGATE FOR ECG ANNUAL MEETING**

Mrs. Hall stated Council should appoint new voting delegates for the ECG Annual Meeting as Mr. White is currently named as an alternate voting delegate in the absence of Mayor Howard. Mr. Wilson offered a motion to appoint Mayor Howard as the voting delegate and Mr. Lawrence as the alternate delegate. Seconded by Mr. Jones, the motion carried unanimously.

**10. APPROVE RESOLUTION NAMING THOSE AUTHORIZED TO SIGN DOCUMENTS FOR MEAG & TRUST**

Mrs. Hall stated Mr. White is also named as an authorized signature of MEAG & Trust documents. Mr. Dodd offered a motion naming Mayor Howard and Mrs. Hall as those authorized to sign documents for MEAG & Trust. Seconded by Mr. Wilson, the motion carried unanimously.

**11. 2015 ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR SUPPLEMENTAL POWER**

Mrs. Hall recommended that the City continue to contract with MEAG as its agent for purchase of supplemental power. Mrs. Hall stated that MEAG is working with the City of Monroe for a contract for 2015 for the purchase of excess power. Mr. Dodd offered a motion to continue to contract with the MEAG. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence, the motion carried unanimously.

**12. APPROVE AGREEMENT FOR ENGINEERING SERVICES WITH HOFSTADTER & ASSOCIATES FOR THE CDBG PROJECT**

Mrs. Hall reviewed Hofstadter & Associates' engineering services agreement at the cost of \$50,404 for the CDBG project. Mrs. Hall stated that the Regional Commission sent out an RFP for engineering services and Hofstadter & Associates was awarded the project and this is the contract for their services. Mr. Wilson offered a motion to approve the agreement. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence, the motion carried unanimously.

**13. APPROVE NON-EXCLUSIVE EASEMENT WITH STATE PROPERTIES COMMISSION FOR FORSYTH READINESS CENTER – 443 ENSIGN ROAD**

Mr. Melton reviewed the non-exclusive easement provided by the State Properties Commission for the purpose of constructing and maintaining an electrical line at the Armory. Mr. Dodd offered a motion to accept the easement. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence, the motion carried unanimously.

#### **14. APPROVAL TO ADVERTISE FIRE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION ORDINANCE**

Mrs. Hall stated both Mr. Melton and the City Solicitor had reviewed the fire prevention and protection ordinance and although there will be some minor amendments, she recommended advertising the proposed ordinance. Mr. Wilson offered a motion to advertise the fire ordinance. Seconded by Mr. Stroud, the motion carried unanimously.

#### **15. APPROVAL FOR CHRISTMAS PARADE PERMIT**

Mrs. Andrews introduced Mrs. Rebekah Babovic, the newly hired Event Coordination for the Chamber of Commerce. Mrs. Babovic approach Council for their approval to close the streets and their support of the Christmas Parade. Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the event permit. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence, the motion carried unanimously. Mrs. Babovic stated she was also working to reinstate Light Up Monroe and has already asked Ms. Ladson and Mrs. Khoury with Forsyth Main Street for their assistance with the downtown business district of Forsyth. Light Up Monroe will be a contest between the cities of Monroe County for the best Christmas Light Show.

#### **16. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE**

Mrs. Hall reviewed invoice totals for each department for a total of \$581,873.27 for general payables and \$335,997.72 for SPLOST payables; for a grand total of \$917,870.99. Mr. Jones offered a motion to approve the invoices. Seconded by Mr. Goolsby, the motion carried unanimously.

#### **ADDITIONAL COUNCIL ITEMS:**

#### **17. CITY ADMINISTRATOR/CITY CLERK REPORT**

Mrs. Hall provided the following information:

- The Incode upgrade is scheduled for November 12<sup>th</sup>. During this time, City Hall will be closed for 2-4 hours. The employees will still report at normal time to complete other tasks.
- Eggs and Issues is tomorrow morning at Eggstra-ordinary.
- Council will hold a budget meeting tomorrow morning at 9:00AM.
- Public Safety Day is Saturday from 1:00PM – 3:00PM.

#### **18. CITY ATTORNEY REPORT:**

Mr. Melton stated the Regional Commission had completed the first draft of the new charter and encouraged all council members to review.

## **19. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Mr. Lawrence stated there is 3 hour regional training coming available and encouraged council members to attend in order to be more effective leaders. Mr. Jones agreed to the importance of training, but asked Mr. Lawrence to lobby to have these trainings offered online.

Mayor and Council had nothing additional to report.

### **ADDITIONAL BUSINESS**

**a. Ronald Bearden** – Mr. Ronald Bearden, 441 Sunset Terrace, came before council to inquire about the investigation of a restaurant in downtown Forsyth. Mr. Bearden stated the restaurant had issues with paying their light bill. When citizens asked about the situation they were only told it was being investigated. Mr. Jones stated the investigation revealed there was no criminal intent and the restaurant has since then set up a payment plan. The investigation did reveal City Hall at the time had no historical documentation to show which employees completed what action. Mr. Jones stated the City is working to fix this issue with the implementation of a keystroke software. The investigation is available at City Hall for review.

### **ADJOURN**

Mr. Jones offered a motion to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Mr. Stroud. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 6:41PM.

Submitted by:

Janice L. Hall, City Clerk