

## **MINUTES**

### **FORSYTH CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**MARCH 3, 2015**

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

Mayor Howard called the meeting to order at 6:00PM and led the pledge of allegiance. Councilmember Jimmy Jones 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/Interim Administrator, Janice Hall; and Executive Assistant, Kristal Dunn.

#### **COUNCIL ACTION ITEMS**

##### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Jones offered a motion to approve the minutes from the February 17, 2015 Council meeting. Seconded by Mr. Stroud, the motion carried unanimously, (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Stroud, Goolsby, Jones, Jones and Lawrence).

##### **MRS. GEORGIANNE BEARDEN – REQUEST FOR ACTION ON VARIANCE GRANTED TO PERCELL KELLY FOR HOME ON INDIAN SPRINGS DRIVE**

Mrs. Bearden came before council to request action and review the variance that was granted to Percell Kelly for the 900 square foot home that he built on Indian Springs Drive. Mrs. Bearden stated that the house has been sold and Mr. Kelly has moved. Mrs. Bearden asked if any conditions were placed on the variance that the council had granted to Mr. Kelly. Mr. Melton stated that the council can place conditions on a zoning change, but that no conditions were placed on this variance. Mrs. Bearden questioned where that left the owners on Indian Springs Drive. Mrs. Bearden state that she feels like that the house in question lowers the values of the other homes on Indian Springs Drive. Mr. Dodd agreed, and stated that the council was under the assumption that Mr. Kelly would do a good job and follow through on the property. Mrs. Hall stated that this was discussed at the February Planning & Zoning meeting and she stated to P&Z then and now to council that this is unfortunately a learning experience and that any future approvals should include in the motion any promises made by the developer. Mrs. Hall stated that Mr. Kelly's presentation to Planning & Zoning and City Council was that he would first build a 900 square foot home and then an additional 600 square foot would be added at a later time, but no conditions were included in the motions made and no stipulations as to a timeframe.

Mrs. Hall stated the property was sold before the additions were made. Mr. Goolsby thanked Mrs. Bearden for coming to the council. Mr. Goolsby stated that he does not believe that the home is even 900 square feet. Mr. Goolsby apologized for not doing due diligence, and that it was a lesson learned.

#### **CHIEF DAVID HERNDON – ISO RATING**

Chief Herndon stated that it was a privilege to come before the Council and Mayor to announce the reduction in our ISO rating from a 5 to a 2. Chief Herndon stated that out of 49,010 cities in the US only 750 are class 2 and that in the State of GA we are 1 of 27 with a rating of 2. Chief Herndon stated that this will have a big impact on economic impact to the city, due to companies looking at the rating and that home owners would save money on their home insurance. Mr. Wilson thanked the Chief and his department, and stated that this is an excellent tool for economic development in recruiting industries. Mr. Dodd stated that the rating would include all properties within 5 miles of the Forsyth Fire Department.

#### **AUTHORIZATION TO MOVE FROM TICKET FAST PAY TO GOVERNMENT WINDOW PAYMENTS FOR COURT CREDIT PAYMENTS**

Mrs. Hall recommended approval to change vendors from Ticket Fast pay to Government Window for Municipal Court credit card payments. Mrs. Hall stated that the new software would give additional information, including court dates, all information on previous tickets the person has received, along with the amount of the ticket. The company will provide a dedicated toll free number for the city. Mr. Goolsby offered a motion that to change vendors to Government Window for court payments. Seconded by Mr. Jones, the motion carried unanimously, (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Stroud, Goolsby, Wilson, Jones and Lawrence).

#### **TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION FOR GMA ANNUAL CONVENTION**

Mrs. Hall reviewed the cost for the GMA Annual Convention, in Savannah, GA on June 26<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Goolsby offered a motion that the request be approved. Mr. Jones asked if the travel authorization forms had been submitted as required by the Travel Policy and Mrs. Hall stated that they have not. Mr. Lawrence offered a motion to table the matter until the proper documentation is submitted. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously, (voting in the affirmation were Dodd, Stroud, Goolsby, Wilson, Jones and Lawrence).

#### **COUNTY CONSOLIDATION**

Mrs. Hall stated that a letter was received and copied to Mayor and Council from the County Commissioners with regard to consolidation of the governments of Monroe County and the City of Forsyth. Mrs. Hall stated that City Attorney Bobby Melton was not copied on the

letter but a copy was provided to him and she had requested Mr. Melton draft a Resolution in opposition to the County requests for consolidation, which he has provided. Mayor Howard read the Resolution (a copy of the Resolution is attached to the approved minutes). Mr. Jones offered a motion to approve the Resolution and Mr. Stroud seconded the motion. Mr. Goolsby stated that it was troubling that the County made a motion to consolidate and sent a letter to the Capital without any knowledge of the City. Mr. Goolsby stated that the City has made the effort to change the Charter and create the CVB, and that the City is moving forward. Mr. Goolsby stated that he considers it a personal attack. Mayor Howard stated that it is strange that a county commissioner that has only been in office for two months, has solved all the problems for the city. Mayor Howard stated that the City does not owe a dime on the water system and does not have to rely on SPLOT or any other LOST. Mayor Howard stated that he felt like he was being told that is what you are going to do. Mr. Wilson stated that he thought a non-binding question should be added to the upcoming election ballot about the consolidation and ask the citizens what they thought about the consolidation. Mr. Stroud stated he did not think that the consolidation was the right thing for our citizens. Mr. Wilson stated that most cities and counties that consolidate are the ones where the city is the biggest piece of the county. Mr. Wilson stated the cities are being formed, and that efficiency comes with a cost and with a loss of representation. Mayor Howard stated that there would be no issues if previous council had been doing what this council is doing now; the city is a business and has services that can stand on their own; and the city is not trying to make huge amounts of money. Mr. Goolsby stated that this action was a direct slap in the face. Mayor Howard stated that he is tired of the city elected officials being treated like 2<sup>nd</sup> class elected officials. Mr. Stroud asked what the city would need to do to get the question on the ballot. Mr. Melton stated that he would look into it. Mr. Goolsby stated that if the citizens are asked and they come back that they want consolidation then he will be the first to say “let’s go with it”, but the question needs to be asked and not just sent to the State Representatives without even talking with the city first. Mrs. Hall stated that she is working with MEAG, ECG, and GMA to look at city agreements to see what affect consolidation would have on those agreements. Mayor Howard stated that the sky is the limit of where we can go from here. Mr. Goolsby stated that if the Council was not in agreement we would not have rewritten the Charter. The motion carried unanimously, (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Stroud, Goolsby, Wilson, Jones and Lawrence).

## **APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE INVOICES**

Mrs. Hall reviewed invoice totals for each department for a total of \$88,898.43 for general payables, none for Seized and none for SPLOST/GRANT payables; for a grand total of \$88,898.43. Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the invoices. Seconded by Mr. Stroud, the motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Stroud, Goolsby, Wilson, Jones and Lawrence).

Mrs. Hall reviewed two requisitions for approval, one for \$4800 for Consolidated Pipe & Supply Co., Inc. for an insertion valve for repair work at Betsy Lynn and another one for \$11,650 for Davis Plumbing for the relocation of 8 water meters along W. Johnston St. and N. Jackson St. Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the requisitions. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Stroud, Goolsby, Wilson, Jones and Lawrence).

Mr. Goolsby stated that the work to relocate the water meters is not the only work that needs to be done in the courtyard behind the buildings along Johnston/Jackson/Adams streets. Mr. Goolsby stated that the storm water runoff and sewer lines in the courtyard need to be addressed.

## **ADDITIONAL COUNCIL ITEMS:**

### **CITY ADMINISTRATOR/CITY CLERK REPORT**

- Public hearing for April 7<sup>th</sup> for setback variance request for Robert Chandler on Harold G Parkway – storage building facility – old GCR tire building.
- Public hearing for April 7<sup>th</sup> for height variance request for Grant Apartments/Bran Hospitality on Grant/Beverly streets – 4 story hotel
- Mrs. Hall stated that the 1998 Explorer Johnny Hodges was driving was given to the Fire Dept. for training after it completely broke down. Mrs. Hall stated that Steve Butler had fixed the Fire Dept.'s old red car for him to drive until something could be bought. Mrs. Hall recommended buying a pickup for \$20,000 from Alan Vigil Ford, with a 4 year lease @ \$450/month. Mr. Wilson offered a motion to purchase the vehicle from Alan Vigil Ford. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Stroud, Goolsby, Jones, Wilson and Lawrence). Chief Herndon asked that Mr. Hodges be given permission to purchase a 4-wheel drive truck and Mr. Jones stated that he has permission to purchase a \$20,000 truck whether it be a small pickup or 4-wheel drive does not matter.

## **CITY ATTORNEY REPORT**

- Mr. Melton recommended the Resolution be signed by everyone tonight.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Parks/Recreation/Cemeteries Committee**

- Mr. Dodd stated that Arbor Day was a success, and that two students were given \$50 awards for writing a paper. Mr. Dodd stated that the Tree Board delayed giving out trees until the following week due to weather. Mr. Dodd stated that the Parks/Recreation/Cemeteries Committee would be meeting soon to discuss tearing down the old Rec building and pool.

### **Public Safety Committee**

- Mr. Stroud again congratulated Chief Herndon on the ISO rating, and stated that Chief Corley had his accreditation coming up.

### **Public Relations Committee**

- Mr. Goolsby stated that the Public Relations Committee would have a follow up meeting with the Chamber Executive Board on March 19<sup>th</sup>, and that they would be coming back to council with recommendations. Mr. Goolsby stated that a lease has been signed to bring a new restaurant to Forsyth.

### **Administrative Committee**

- Mr. Jones had nothing further to report.

### **Public Works Committee**

- Mr. Wilson stated that the recommendation has been approved to finance the grapple truck with ourselves.

### **Public Utilities Committee**

- Mr. Lawrence had nothing further to report.

## **MAYOR'S REPORT**

- Mayor Howard stated that last Thursday night he attended the Black Caucus dinner as a guest of GMA. He stated that he felt that GMA had a stronger relationship with bigger cities. Mayor Howard stated that he would be reaching out to Mrs. Sanders and the FBLA to see how they are coming along with ideas for a new City Seal. Mr. Stroud stated that Mrs. Sanders needs a .jpeg of the city's current seal.

## **ADDITIONAL COUNCIL BUSINESS**

- Mr. Stroud stated that we need good signage to welcome people into the city. Mr. Stroud asked what we needs to be done to renovate Country Club Park, the golf

course entrance, and the old pool and tennis court area. Mr. Stroud stated that we are a family oriented community. Mayor Howard stated he was in support of the effort. Mr. Stroud stated that he feels it should be a joint venture with the County. Mrs. Hall stated that Mr. Randall has submitted a RFP for review to tear down the old recreation building.

- Mrs. Hall requested permission to close Jackson Street from Main Street to King Street and all the side streets in that area for the Forsythia Festival on March 13 & 14. Mrs. Hall stated that the Chamber would be in charge of getting the streets pressure washed after the festival. Mr. Lawrence offered a motion to approve the closing of the streets for the Forsythia Festival. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously (voting in the affirmative were Dodd, Stroud, Goolsby, Jones, Wilson and Lawrence).

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- Mr. Martin Presley came before council as the Chairman of the Planning & Zoning and stated that several mistakes were made on the approval and review of the variance submitted by Mr. Kelly, and that there was a lot of conversation about square footage during the discussion of the variance request. Mr. Presley stated that they had dealt with sketches and not professional drawings. Mayor Howard told Mr. Presley that he appreciates the work that the Planning & Zoning Board does.

#### **ADJOURN**

There being no additional business to discuss, Mr. Stroud offered a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence, the motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:50PM.

Submitted by:

Kristal Dunn, Executive Assistant