



**BLAKELY CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES
CITY HALL**

SEPTEMBER 5, 2017

6:00 P.M.

I) Public Hearing – Rezoning Columbia Street

The Building Official, Kenneth Jones, informed the Council that Greg Connors had purchased the lot next to his current insurance business and would like to build a small building for paperwork and additional parking. He is asking that the property be rezoned from R1(residential) to Commercial. No members of the public spoke regarding this item. Councilman Hutchins questioned if it had come before the Planning Commission, to which Mr. Jones informed him that it had and it had been approved by the Planning Commission. The hearing closed at 6:10p.m.

II) CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Let the record show that Mayor Anthony Howard call the meeting to order. Mayor Anthony Howard, Councilman James Crozier, Councilman Frank Thornton, Councilman Al Hutchins and Councilman Charles Middleton were all present. Also present were the City Attorney, Tommy Coleman and the City Clerk, Melinda Crook. Reverend James Martin gave the invocation. The Mayor Anthony Howard led the Council and public in the Pledge of Allegiance

III) APPROVE MINUTES

A motion was made by Councilman Hutchins and seconded by Councilman Middleton to approve the August 1, 2017 minutes. The motion carried unanimously by Councilman present.

IV) Citizens And Delegations

L. E. Lucas – Billing For The Fiber Internet Service - Mr. Lucas informed the Council that he had been a member of the community for 35 to 40 years. He stated that he was concerned about getting BlakeyNet but signed up on 7/20/17 and paid his fees but was not told or was not emphasized that all future billings would be by internet and due by the 10th of each month. When he received his regular utility billing he paid that and when returning home from out of town found that his internet was not working. He purchased a new router, thinking that was the problem, and when it still did not work he called the City and was informed that services were disconnected due to non-payment. He stated that the late fees were waived, due to the misunderstanding about the billing procedures; he then paid his balance and found out that the e-mail on file was incorrect so he got that straightened out. He felt that there should be time to pursue that the first billings/e-mail address are correct before customers get disconnect. He feels that there is a procedure problem and that it needs to be addressed. The Mayor informed Mr. Lucas that he had addressed this with the staff and that measure had been put into place to help with this type of issue.

Ebony Freeman – 5 Families Lost Homes - Ms. Freeman addressed the Council regarding what has been happening at Tanglewood earlier this year. She stated that there had been a fire and that several apartments were involved. She informed the Council that Red Cross had assisted for 2 days and then upon talking to the manager these families had been told that they were on their own but that they could come back after the repairs had taken place and when it was safe to return. She stated that there have been issues due to manager staff changes. She also stated that she had been shorted on her security deposit due to late fees for the March rent. She feels that they are being treated unfairly after being told that the balance of the tenants misplaced by the fire could not

move back in. She informed the Council that she was here to make the Council aware in case anything like this was to happen again. The Mayor asked the City Attorney, Tommy Coleman, for his opinion. Mr. Coleman stated that the City does not have any authority in this matter and reminded the Council that Tanglewood Apartments gets tax credits. He then spoke about the circumstances and how disaster organizations usually handle these matters. Ms. Freeman was asked if she had gotten into another location. She stated that she is on a waiting list for the Blakely Housing Authority. A representative from the Housing Authority stated that they had felt they could do some emergency housing but found out that they could not. She informed the Council that they have a waiting list and that due to receiving HUD funding they have to abide by that list and cannot move or place someone above the others on the list. The Mayor questioned if the Housing Authority Board could change this policy. There was discussion about the possibility of a lawsuit if the Housing Authority moved someone above others on the waiting list. Councilman Crozier questioned if tenants in these apartment complexes could get renters insurance to help assist them in these types of situations, to which the Mr. Coleman responded that he felt they could and that it probably would have helped in this situation. The Mayor thanked Ms. Freeman for voicing the issues they were having but reiterated that there was really nothing that the City could do to help them with the apartment complex due to it being privately owned.

Wayne Goocher – Truck Route To Birdsong - Mr. Goocher came before the Council regarding issues getting peanuts to the buying point. He stated that they only run two months out of the year and that one person is trying to get this stopped and that this could cause safety issues. The City Attorney, Tommy Coleman, stated that an Ordinance had been put into place regarding truck routes. He stated that it is within the discretion of the City to approve where commercial trucks could go on City streets but that the City could not regulate State hwy. The Mayor then questioned if Mr. Goocher had a specific request. Mr. Goocher stated that the safest route is coming down Arlington St by Days Inn due to the number of turns. He stated that they could bring 15 to 20 loads per day and other routes would have them coming to the square. Councilman Crozier questioned if there was a specific time period being looked at for use of the City streets designated on the Ordinance. Mr. Goocher stated that two months would work but that could vary according to weather conditions. Mr. Coleman explained how the Ordinance could change, which takes two readings, but that the Council could dispense with a second reading. He then stated that the farmers were a little late in addressing this issue. Councilman Hutchins stated that he had gotten questioned about gas trucks going down Howell St. to which it was stated that this was in violation of the Ordinance. The Mayor stated that the Council needed to do some thinking on this to which Mr. Goocher stated that he started plowing peanuts that day.

V) **Administrative Committee Reports**

Kenneth Jones – Business License Application For White’s Garage At Turnage Tractor Location On Hwy 39 - The Building Official, Kenneth Jones, informed the Council that Mr. George White would like to operate an outdoor garage at 25230 Hwy 39. He stated that an application of this type has to come before the Council due to the screening issue. Mr. Jones spoke of the various barriers and placement for the screening. Councilman Hutchins questioned if it had gone before the Planning Commission, to which Mr. Jones informed him that it did not need to go before the Planning Commission. Councilman Middleton questioned if Mr. White would be required to fence the area, to which Mr. Jones stated that it needed to be completely enclosed. Mr. White informed the Council that he was told by Mr. Jones that there was no problem with the place. He stated that he would put up a fence and is presently trying to clean up the location. The Mayor stated that if approved they must comply with Mr. Jones regarding the Ordinance. The City Attorney clarified the fence structure. Councilman Crozier questioned about a portion of fence that was down presently. Councilman Middleton asked what type of fence would be put up, to which Mr. White stated it would be chain link. The City Attorney stated that there would have to be shrubs along with the fence. Councilman Hutchins asked about a time period, to which Mr. Jones stated that it would have to be done by the time they opened. Mr. Jones informed the Council that he had requested that Three Notch hold the power until the Council rendered a decision. Councilman Hutchins asked Mr. White how long it would take him to do the fence, to which Mr. White responded that he would need to start work and then he would do the best he

could to get the fence completed. Councilman Crozier asked if he could get it completed in a month, to which Mr. White reiterated that he would do the best he could. A motion was made by Councilman Crozier to approve the outdoor garage application for Mr. George White at 25230 Hwy 39. Let the record show that the motion died due to a lack of second.

Planning Commission – Rezoning Application, Greg Conner, Columbia Street

The Building Official, Kenneth Jones, informed the Council that the Planning Commission had approved the rezoning of the lot next to Conner Insurance from R1 to Commercial. A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Crozier to approve the rezoning from R1 to Commercial for the lot next to Conner Insurance on Columbia St. The motion carried unanimously by Councilman present.

E-911 Deputy Director, Jim Copp, informed the Council of several E-911 employees he wanted to recognize. He stated that Elizabeth Jordan had passed her basic communication officers training and that Krystal Levatt passed her class to become a certified training officer. He then stated that he also wanted to recognize Chris Cox. He stated that four Chiefs from other areas had spoken very highly on how Chris conducts himself. Jim spoke of how much Chris has done in E-911. He stated that Chris also wanted his partner, Jade McCorkle, recognized since they work as a team. Jim then went on to update the Council on the monthly E-911 activity.

VI) City Attorney’s Report

First Reading – Ordinance Amending Ad Valorem Tax - The City Attorney, Tommy Coleman, stated that this Ordinance regarding setting the millage rate. He informed the Council of the procedures if there was no increase and the procedures if there was an increase. He stated that the City was looking to increase the millage rate by 1 mill from 3.25 mills to 4.25 mills and that due to this increase the City would have to hold 3 public hearings and that the Ordinance would need to be adopted after the millage rate was set. Mr. Coleman then informed the Council of an issue regarding the TAVT tax and the miscalculations by the former Tax Commissioner. He stated that GMA is going to be reviewing the data, for the City, due to it being shown that the City was overpaid around \$500,000 and the school system was underpaid. He informed the Council that he would update them once a firm decision regarding these figures is made.

Mr. Coleman informed the Council that the Mayor had asked him to look into the Public Safety Agreement. He stated that he has been through this agreement several times. He then stated that other Cities have agreements with Public Safety but they work a little different. He stated that in the other agreements the Sheriff would calculate out the cost of the services to the City, down to the penny, and the City would then pay, to the County, according to these calculations. He stated that this type of agreement sometimes works and sometimes does not work. He then stated that he feels that the current Public Safety Board is not a legal entity and that the current contract would probably not stand up if ever challenged. He presented the Council with a letter of opinion on this matter.

VII) City Clerk’s Report

The City Clerk presented the Council for financial reports. She informed the Council that the Housing Authority had found that one of the PILOT payments had been missed and that they would be getting that paid for 2017. She updated the Council on the prepaid metering program, informing them that there were 79 customers on prepaid. She informed the Council that all questionnaires for the new software had been sent off and that the staff was now working on getting the forms requested together to send. She informed the Council that she would check to see if the auditor was available to give the Council the audit report at the meeting in October. The Mayor questioned when the current audit contracted would end to which the Clerk stated it was after this year.

Amendment To Public Safety Budget - The Clerk presented the Council with a budget adjustment for Public Safety. She informed the Council that this adjustment was due to their 2018 budget being adopted half way through our 2017 budget and that there was a slight increase. A

motion was made by Councilman Crozier and seconded by Councilman Thornton to approve the budget adjustment for the Public Safety line item. The motion carried unanimously by Councilman present.

The Clerk informed the Council that the soccer goals are up at the park and will be moving forward with the basketball goals shortly. She also informed the Council that the LMIG sidewalk work had been completed.

VIII) NEW ITEMS PROPOSED BY MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

Set meeting dates for Public Hearings on Millage Rate Increase

The Mayor asked that the Clerk e-mail the Council with dates for the public hearings.

Flu Shots For Employees - The Clerk informed the Council that this is something the Council has allowed in the past years for the City employees. The Mayor informed the Council that we had received the renewal quote on the City health insurance. He stated that it appeared to be about a 12% increase in cost. Councilman Hutchins questioned if the Council was included in the flu shots. The Clerk stated that the Council had not been included previously. She asked for the City Attorney's opinion, to which he stated that the Council could be included. A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Thornton to approve flu shots for the City employees and the City Council. The motion carried unanimously by Councilman present.

Bids For CDBG Project - The City Clerk informed the Council that Polyengineering had put the 2016 CDBG (Day, Love and Jesse Johnson) project out for bid. She stated that the bids had been opened early this month and that only two had been received. She informed the Council that Blankenship Contracting had submitted a bid of \$480,735 and Popco, Inc had submitted a bid for \$707,299.21. The Mayor informed the Council that after opening the bids Popco had realized that they had miscalculated their bid but at that point it was too late. The Clerk reminded the Council that the 2014 LMIG was involved in this project for the resurfacing of a portion of Jesse Johnson. A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Thornton to approve the bid submitted by Blankenship Contracting in the amount of \$480,735.00. Councilman Crozier questioned if this was grant funds. There was some discussion regarding this project and the LMIG funds. The motion carried unanimously by Councilman present.

Sale Of Two Police Cars - Chief Hardrick informed the Council that there had been an auction and that two 2010 Crown Victoria's, purchased with USDA funds had been sold in this auction. He stated that one car sold for \$2,500 and the other sold for \$1,550.00. A motion was made by Councilman Crozier and seconded by Councilman Thornton to approve the sale of these two cars. The motion carried unanimously by Councilman present.

Change Voting Delegate For Georgia Public Web - The Mayor informed the Council that we are a member of Georgia Public Web and that Jason Gauntt had been the City's representative and with Jason no longer with the City he felt that Matt Hammond should now be the City's representative. A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Crozier to approve the appointment of Matt Hammond as the City's Georgia Public Web representative/voting delegate. The motion carried unanimously by Councilman present.

The Mayor informed the Council that there was a Hospital Authority meeting the next day at 6:00pm at the hospital. He stated that he would encourage the public to attend due to discussion about the new company taking over the hospital.

The Mayor informed the Council of a tank leaking in the parking lot donated to the City by Bill Stone. He stated that there was a smell of gas but that it was only about 5% gas and 95% water. He stated that the geologist was call, Sam Almaee and that all EPD paperwork had been done.

Councilman Hutchins stated that a fire hydrant needs to be placed on Howell St. due to there not being one between Walker Springs Rd. and the Alternative School. He stated that there had been

a fire in this area and that the tank truck had been used due to not having a fire hydrant. The Mayor stated that we would get the Water Department to get a hydrant place on Howell St.

Councilman Crozier thanked the Building Official, Kenneth Jones, for all of his help with a new BBQ business at the Price Service Station, on the corner of Liberty and S. Main St.

IX) PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Faye Price came before the Council questioning water and sewer charges. The Mayor referred this matter to the City Clerk. The Clerk informed Ms. Price that there are two different rate structures, one for water and a different one for sewer. She stated that after a certain amount of water usage the sewer charge gets higher than the water. The Mayor explained how the sewer charge is based off of water usage.

Lee, from Birdsong, addressed the Council with two questions. The first was how does the new truck route Ordinance pertain to an F150 pulling a loaded or unloaded peanut wagon. The City Attorney stated that it would have to do with the size of the truck and that he does not feel that they are the same as the semi-trucks that the Ordinance is talking about. The City Attorney explained about the Ordinance. Lee then stated that a phone call would have helped the situation with the Ordinance.

X) ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Thornton to adjourn the September 5th City Council meeting. The motion carried unanimously by Councilman present.

Anthony Howard, Mayor