



Blakely City Council Minutes

February 11, 2016

City Hall

2:00 P.M.

I) Call To Order, Roll Call, Invocation, Pledge Of Allegiance

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

II) City Clerk's Report

Budget Adjustments - The Clerk presented the Council with interdepartmental budget adjustments for the General Fund. A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Thornton to approve the budget adjustments presented by the Clerk. The motion carried unanimously by Councilman present.

III) New Items Proposed By Mayor And City Council

Land Swap with Birdsong - Greg Grimsley, Corporate Manufacturer Manager with Birdsong, spoke to the Council about the section of N. Bay St. which runs through their operations Plant 1 on the East side of the street and Plant 2 on the West side of the street. He then stated that they have closed Plant 2 but that they still have cold storages on both sides. He then stated that they have a lot of traffic back and forth between these areas. He also stated that there is a lot of public traffic that goes through this area as well. He spoke of the risk due to the high traffic. He gave a brief layout of the area that their closure request encompasses which would be about 490 yards. He showed a map stating that they want to close the street from McDonald, at the DeLoach property, to just before the Day property. He informed the Council that Birdsong is willing to exchange property with the City, on Main St., for this section of Bay St. He stated that part of the reason for the closure is due to new FDA regulations and to correct auditing issues due to this area being open to the public. He also stated that they have had a lot of vandalism to their property as well, such as brakes being cut on rail cars. The Mayor questioned the upgrades to the Plant and asked if this increased their productivity, to which Mr. Grimsley responded that it has and they are taking in peanuts from other areas as well. He stated that they would be installing gates to block off this area. He stated that the gates would be open during the day but with signs stating that this is private property. He further stated that they would also have other security features that would be put in place. The City Attorney then explained that an Ordinance would need to be done with a diagram which states that this portion of the road serves no substantial purpose to the City. He also stated that the owners of any adjoining property owners would need to be notified but that it would not require a public hearing. He also confirmed that the City would need to get easements for City utilities. The City Attorney stated that he would have an Ordinance prepared for the next meeting. The Mayor informed Mr. Grimsley that the City appreciates their business and that the City will assist in getting this area safer for them.

Proposed Update to City Charter - The City Attorney stated that the Mayor had asked him to review the Charter and make any necessary changes. He stated that the City Manager and City Administrator had previously been removed due to these not working out so well for the City. He then stated that since these were taken out the Mayor has been acting Administrator but that this is not what has been reflected in the Charter. He

also stated that telecommunication had been added. He discussed with the Council the quorum section stating that it could be added that the Mayor could vote to constitute the third vote needed but if left as is the Mayor can only vote in a tie. The Mayor questioned stating that we operate like that at the present time. The Council agreed that they should operate by the Mayor being able to vote as a third if needed. The City Attorney reiterated that the biggest change was to section 2.27 (Chief Executive Officer) and the duties of the Mayor which will only clean up the Charter to represent how the City operates at the present time. Councilman Hutchins questioned if any changes were being made with how the Councilman operate. The City Attorney stated that nothing in their operation in the City will change. He stated that their purpose is to set the laws/policies. The Mayor then questioned section 5.11 (Regular Elections; Time for Holding). Mayor Howard stated that Mayor was listed in the wrong election cycle and should be moved to (b) under that section. The Mayor questioned if taxes could be paid more than once a year to which the City Attorney stated that they could be only in two payments. The City Attorney stated that the session was get close to an end so this would need to be processed quickly. A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Thornton to approve the Resolution for the changes in the Charter with the correction discussed. The motion carried unanimously by the Councilman present.

City Wide Fiber Optic Proposal - Jason Gauntt with SGRITA spoke to the Council regarding the study done by Engineering Associates of bringing fiber to the home. He gave a computerized presentation to the Council. He briefly explained what fiber is. He stated that the City could utilize their infrastructure to roll out fiber to the homes. He informed the Council that copper cable is coming to the end of its life and that fiber is more flexible and has come way down in price. Mr. Gauntt touched on what it would mean to Blakely. It will allow faculty and students to be connected at the home. He touched on telemedicine and how this could help citizens by being able to connect with Dr.'s through high speed internet. He stated that it will help drive Economic Development. He stated that it will provide the citizens with a better quality of life (online shopping, school, banking etc...) He gave an explanation of the equipment that would be needed and how that will serve the community. He stated that this is leading edge technology. He then discussed the equipment that will serve the home which would be either by equipment in the home or outside of the home (very similar to Hughesnet or Dishnet.) He stated that service could run from \$90-\$300 depending on the speed needed. He stated that all speed tests have passed good so far. He went on to speak of a business case and explained how he put that together. He stated that he went through the Engineering Associates study and that they had come up with a projected cost of 3.6million. It was question how long. He stated that if the Council opted to move forward they would look at 9 to 12 months from the date we get the fiber here. He figured being able to serve customers in early 2017. He was then questioned if we were looking at serving businesses as soon as possible, to which he answered absolutely. He showed a map that Engineering Associates had come up with to break up the City in section and that according to that map the more populated areas would be completed first so as to get citizens on the service quickly. The Mayor asked what other areas in Rural GA that have fiber to the home. Jason stated that he did not know of any that have fiber all the way to the home. He knows of some that have fiber/coax mix. The Mayor questioned how this helps SGRITA. Jason stated that it would allow them to be a broadband hub and a major player in SW GA. It was then explained that the City would sell to the customers and purchase the service from SGRITA. It was stated that no mitigating factors have been found at the point. Jason then stated that out of the 3.6 million about 42% of the cost is materials and that these figures are 100% contracted out for this project. He then informed the Council that he would be taking the figures and dwindle them down according to what internal work can be done by the City. He stated that he will be looking at cost two ways, one where we purchase materials and one with contractor and material cost. A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Hutchins to move forward with the project of fiber to the home proposed by Engineering Associates. The motion carried unanimously by Councilman present.

The Mayor discussed with the Council a contract for services from Advocates for Better Communities regarding funding, in the amount of \$3.5 million, for a new Fire

Station/Government Services Building. He stated that there were two proposals, one which was just to follow through with the writing and submitting of a Community Facilities application in the amount of \$4,000 and the other for being administrators through construction which they would follow through until completed, which would be a 3% administration fee. A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Crozier to approve the contract for services to apply for funding of the new Fire Station/Government Services Building. The motion carried unanimously by Councilman present.

Councilman Hutchins questioned if meetings could be in the evenings due to some people not being able to attend.

The Council picked a date and time for the ribbon cutting for the playground equipment to be Tuesday the 16th at 4:00p.m. It was questioned if we needed signs posting an age limit for the equipment.

IV) Adjournment

A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Thornton to adjourn the February 11th Special Called meeting. The motion carried unanimously by Councilman present.

Anthony Howard, Mayor