



Blakely City Council Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2012

City Hall

6:00 P.M.

I) Call To Order, Invocation, Roll Call

Mayor Howard called the meeting to order. Elder Eddie Stapleton gave the invocation. Mayor Howard led the Council and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance. Let the record show that Mayor Howard, Councilman Mills, Councilman Hutchins, Councilman Smith and Councilman Middleton were all present. Let the record show that also present were the City Attorney, Tommy Coleman, the Utility Director, Charles Jenkins, the City Clerk, Melinda Crook, Department Head James Allen and Fire Chief Kenneth Jones.

II) Approve Minutes

A motion was made by Councilman Al Hutchins and seconded by Councilman Charles Middleton to approve the February 7th Minutes. The motion carried unanimously

III) Citizens And Delegations

Linda Howard – parking on square

Ms. Howard addressed the Council regarding parking on the square for merchants other than food establishments especially for elderly citizens. She informed the Council that the 1st of the month was especially bad. Ms. Howard stated that the parking is a big problem when court is in session. She also stated that customers who are at the food establishments tend to stay up to two hours. She also asked the Council if anything could be done regarding a handicap ramp in front of her shop. She asked the Council for any help that they could give. Mayor Howard offered to talk to the Judge and ask if he could ask individuals who might be in court all day to park off the square. Charles Jenkins stated that he would get back in touch with his contact at DOT regarding a handicap ramp in front of her shop. The Mayor also suggested designating an additional parking spot as handicap on that side of the street and Ms. Howard suggested making it handicap for certain time periods. Mr. Jenkins said that he would ask DOT that as well.

Ms. Louise Holley - commercial traffic on Arlington Street

Ms. Holley addressed the Council regarding commercial truck traffic on Arlington Street. She asked the Council to make this particular street residential. She informed the Council of how dangerous the issue is of commercial trucks on Arlington Ave. The City Attorney informed the Council that all City streets were residential unless designated as a truck route by the Council. There was then some discussion between the Council regarding how to handle trucks on Arlington Ave. The Mayor informed Ms. Holley that Birdsong and Southern Ag would be contacted as a courtesy about not using Arlington Ave. as a cut through. The Council agreed that because the Code Enforcement

Officers were actual Certified Peace Officers they could issue citations for commercial trucks being operated on Arlington Ave.

Harvey McCoy – Action Outreach Inc. – action on swimming pool

Mr. McCoy spoke to the Council regarding any assistance they could do to assist with activities involving kids that may not be as athletic as other children. He spoke of the fact that children need something to do during the summer so as to expend their excess energy. He stated that keeping the children busy with activities could keep down trouble as well. He asked the Council to investigate a way to get the pool up and running by this summer. Mayor Howard referred the this matter to Councilman Mills and Councilman Hutchins to get with the Rec. Dept. Director to find out what it would take to get the pool operational and bring their findings back to the full Council for a decision on how to proceed.

Mr. Kirk Chambers, from Rural Development, came before the Council to read a Letter of Condition for the loan/grant with USDA for patrol cars. Councilman Mills reiterated to the Council and public that this was monies that had been requested in the previous year's Public Safety Budget and that there was a split with the County in regards to the loan/grant. The Mayor questioned Mr. Chambers if what was happening at this meeting was acceptance of the funds due to the City not knowing what may happen with Public Safety after this year's Sherriff's race. The Council was informed that the loan/grant could be refused any time until the loan/grant paperwork has gone through the closing process. The Letter of Conditions was then read to the Council. A motion was made by Councilman Charles Middleton and seconded by Councilman Andy smith to approve the Mayor and Clerk as signing designee's for the loan/grant from the USDA Rural Development for the Public Safety patrol cars with the loan amount being \$108,000 and the grant amount being \$25,000 to keep the loan/grant avenue available. The motion carried unanimously.

A short recess was called for paperwork to be signed.

IV) Administrative Committee Reports

Beer & Wine Licenses for Harish M Patel

A motion was made by Councilman Charles Middleton and seconded by Councilman Andy Smith to approve the beer & wine license for Harish M. Patel. The motion carried unanimously

V) City Attorney's Report

Headstart lease

A motion was made by Councilman Charles Middleton and seconded by Councilman Al Hutchins to approve the Headstart Lease with additional wording stating that the City is not financially responsible should the Southwest Georgia Comm. Action Council not carry out grant conditions. The motion carried unanimously

Resolution to dissolve city development authority

A motion was made by Councilman Al Hutchins and seconded by Councilman Torre' Mills to approve the Resolution to dissolve the City Development Authority. The motion carried unanimously

Contract Early County 2055

A motion was made by Councilman Torre' Mills and seconded by Councilman Charles Middleton to approve the contract with Early County 2055 with changes amending #4 (Representation in Governance & Oversight) to state the Mayor

and/or designee shall be a member of the committee. The motion carried unanimously

Resolution approving contract with Tax Specialists of Georgia

The City Attorney explained that these individuals will review the City's records on sewer projects to see if there are any documents to submit to GA Dept of Revenue for reimbursement of sales tax monies to the City. He also explained that the fee for this service is 25% of whatever is refunded but that if no refund will be issued then no payment will be made to this company. Councilman Mills questioned the dates of January 2009 thru December 2012 on the Power of Attorney form. A motion was made by Councilman Charles Middleton and seconded by Councilman Al Hutchins to approve the Resolution approving and authorizing execution of the contract with Tax Specialists of Georgia and the Power of Attorney. The motion carried unanimously

First reading of an ordinance amending article IV of Chapter 8

There was a first reading of an Ordinance Amending Article IV of Chapter 8 of the City Code of the City of Blakely to provide for charges of the continuing use of rooms, lodging or accommodations.

Intergovernmental contract with the County for rural fire protection

The Mayor informed the Council that there has been no update on the intergovernmental contract with the County for quite some time and that he was working on getting all contracts updated. He then asked the Council to review the final submission and to give feedback so that the contract could be submitted to the County for approval then to be approved by the City.

VI) City Clerk's Report

The City Clerk submitted by e-mail the financial reports to the Council. She then informed them that she would make sure that their financial binders got updated with the most recent reports as well. The Clerk informed the Council and public that the City finished the month with 80,776.55 in the General Fund. The Council was then informed that the City had 1,084,081.81 cash on hand made up of 439,693.58(Combined Savings) at First State, 505,366.74(Combined Utility Sinking Fund) and 139,018.49 (DOT) at Commercial State. They were then informed that 87,500 had been moved out of the General Fund into the Combined Savings and Combined Utility Sinking Fund during the month due to the 180,000 refund from Dept. of Public Safety. The Clerk also gave to the Council for review some suggested amendments to the City budget. She informed the Council that the Mayor had asked her to review the budget on a quarterly basis and to bring any amendments or adjustment to the Council for review at those times.

VII) New Items Proposed By Mayor And City Council

Travel and expense policy for City Employees

The Mayor explained to the Council that there was a travel policy in the employee handbook but that he felt there needed to be a little more detailed policy. He then suggested to the Council a City Council Workshop to revise the travel policy.

Discussion of zoning ordinance related to neon signs in the Central Business District. Reference section 18.84

The Mayor briefly explained a few of the issues that had been raised in regards to the neon sign Ordinance and suggested that this be added to the City Council Workshop as well.

Decision on whether we want to continue to work (turn wrenches) behind gas meters

The Council agreed that the City did not need to take on the liability of doing work beyond the meter with the exception of lighting pilot lights or blowing out appliances. They requested for the Clerk to place an insert in the next bill mailing to notify citizens of this change in procedures effective upon receipt of insert.

Tires for the loader at the landfill

The Council agreed that due to the fact that Tractor and Equipment Co. did not provide the tires as per specs and had not to date given an answer to the City regarding providing the correct tires per specs the City would then award the contract to the next lowest bidder.

Award of bid for mower

The Council agreed that because of a misunderstanding of the Local Bidder preference Ordinance the award for the mower should be awarded to Wells Tractor Company.

Ordinance pertaining to livestock within City limits

The Mayor briefly explained a few of the issues pertaining to the livestock Ordinance and suggested that this Ordinance as well be discussed at the City Council Workshop.

Recreation department vehicle purchase issue

The City Attorney explained that because of an issue as to whether the Rec. Dept. had the authority to borrow money financing of the truck and mower by the City through their GMA Master Lease was the easiest way to handle the matter at this time. He then informed the Council that he was working with Bill Mills and Tom Baxley to create a document to correct this problem for future purchases. A motion was made by Councilman Charles Middleton and seconded by Councilman Torre' Mills to approve the Resolution to lease purchase a truck and mower through the GMA master lease. The motion carried unanimously

Remuneration for city council and resolution setting date for pay

A motion was made by Councilman Charles Middleton and seconded by Councilman Torre' Mills regarding remuneration of the Council's pay remaining the same (Councilman \$200.00 per month and Mayor \$300.00 per month). The Council also agreed to make the payment date for their monthly pay the 10th of each month.

Reaffirm city personnel policy

The Mayor informed the Council that he wants to make sure that all areas and employee's of the City operate according to the City's personnel policies. A motion was made by Councilman Torre' Mills and seconded by Councilman Al Hutchins to reaffirm the City Personnel Policy. The motion carried unanimously

The Council agreed on the date of March 20th to hold a City Council Workshop. The Mayor informed the Council that the items to be discussed would be sent to them in advance by way of e-mail.

VIII) Executive Session

Discuss personnel issues, including but not limited to disciplinary action and compensation. In accordance with O.C.G.A. 50-14-3(6)

A motion was made by Councilman Charles Middleton and seconded by Councilman Al Hutchins to enter into the Executive Session. The motion carried unanimously

A motion was made by Councilman Charles Middleton and seconded by Councilman Torre' Mills to adjourn the Executive Session. The motion carried unanimously

IX) Public Comments

Christy Haynes from the Chamber addressed the Council in regards to putting new members on the sign in front of City Hall for a two to three day period. The Mayor informed the Council that no procedures were in affect regarding items place on the sign with the exception of for profit promotion. He informed the Council that this was an item that could be discussed as well in the City Council Workshop. Ms. Haynes brought to the Council's attention some information that she had received from City Hall which should have been redacted.

X) Adjournment

A motion was made by Councilman Torre' Mills and seconded by Councilman Al Hutchins to adjourn the March 6th City Council meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Anthony Howard, Mayor