



**BLAKELY CITY COUNCIL  
MINUTES**

**JANUARY 6, 2015**

**CITY HALL**

**6:00 P.M.**

**I) Call to Order, Roll Call, Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance**

The Mayor, Anthony Howard, called the meeting to order. Let the record show that the Mayor, Anthony Howard, Councilman Al Hutchins, Councilman Charles Middleton, Councilman Smith and Councilman Mills were all present. Pastor Williams gave the invocation. Mayor Howard recited Pledge of Allegiance. Also let the record show that the City Attorney, Tommy Coleman and the City Clerk, Melinda Crook were also present.

**II) Approve Minutes**

A motion was made by Councilman Hutchins and seconded by Councilman Middleton to approve the December 2nd, and December 15th Minutes. The motion carried unanimously by Councilman present.

**III) Citizens and Delegations**

**Danny Williams – Bids for Backhoes** - Mr. Williams stated the buyback program for backhoes would be held this year in August. He also asked the Council permission to go out for bids on two new backhoes. The Council approved unanimously going out for bids on the new backhoes.

**Rodney Thornton – Renew Business License** - Mr. Thornton went back over the circumstance of his suspension and stated that he has had all items cleared, and was requesting that his license be reinstated. A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Hutchins to reinstate Mr. Thornton's business license on March 1, 2015 only if improvements to the facility have been made according to the Building Officials recommendations. This motion carried unanimously

**Town & Country Club – Alcohol License** - Kenneth Jones spoke regarding the Alcohol License for the Town & Country Club. He stated that the Country Club has taken care of their State License and paid fees due. Upon approval of State License, the Country Club will proceed in the correct process to obtain a City Alcohol License. A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Smith to approve the Country Club liquor by drink license. The motion carried unanimously

**Blue Diamond – Alcohol License** - Mayor Howard stated that the Blue Diamond has decided to relinquish their Alcohol License at this time.

**Kenneth Jones – Update for Sign Ordinance** - Mr. Jones requested the Council to review an updated ordinance regarding Signs. He stated the steps that would need to take place such as, transmitting it to the Planning Commission, followed by sending it to the Council for a Public Hearing.

**IV) Administrative Committee Reports**

**Street Sweeper** - Mayor Howard informed the Council that there are two quotes for the Street Sweeper. Charlie Wade explained the use of the street sweeper, and that the one the City currently has is wore out. He also stated that a 2007 model is cheaper and has more features. He stated that the cost of the street sweeper would be \$73,500. A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Hutchins to approve the purchase of the 2007 Elgin street sweeper. The motion carried unanimously

**V) City Attorney's Report**

**Second Reading and Adoption of Election Ordinance**

There was a second reading of the Election Ordinance fixing and publishing qualifying fees for offices subject to election in the year 2015. A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Mills to approve the Election Ordinance. The motion carried unanimously

**Renew Contract for Sheriff Services** - A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Mills to renew the Sheriff Services agreement. The motion carried unanimously

**Renew Chamber of Commerce** - The City Attorney stated the renewal fee for the Chamber of Commerce is \$25,000. A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Smith to renew the Chamber of Commerce agreement. There was also a short discussion between Mayor Howard and Councilman Mills regarding confusion over the fee breakdown on the revenue and expense report. The motion carried unanimously

**Renew Court Square Development** - A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Mills to approve the renewal of the Court Square Development agreement with Hotel/Motel agreement. There were also brief discussions on breakout revenue and expense report regarding hotel/motel tax. The motion carried unanimously

**First Reading of Animal Control Ordinance** - There was a first reading of the Animal Control Ordinance. The City Attorney stated that the change was due to general assembly name reclassifications, such as vicious and dangerous dogs and stated some items that distinguished the differences. Mayor Howard questioned the City Attorney regarding appealing the reclassification of a dog. The City Attorney stated various steps to follow in the event of reclassification of a dog and who might be on an appeal board. He stated that this change was put in place instead of having to come before the Council.

**First Reading of Insurance Ordinance** - There was a first reading of the Insurance Ordinance.

**First Reading of Meter Tampering Ordinance** - There was a reading of the Meter Tampering Ordinance. He stated that there have been some issues in this area and that the Clerk had requested this matter looked into and that this ordinance was something that could assist in tampering cases. He stated that per this ordinance a \$250 reconnect fee would be in place if convicted of tampering.

**Resolution to Recertify Georgia City of Ethics** - A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Smith to approve the Resolution to recertify Blakely's Georgia City of Ethics. The motion carried unanimously

**VI) City Clerk's Report**

The City Clerk presented the Council with financial reports. She informed the Council that the City finished the month of December with \$146,087.19 in the bank. She informed the Council that the City has continued to move \$2,500 into each, the Combined Utility Sinking Fund and the Combined Savings Accounts. The decrease, in the bank from November to December was \$71,978.53. This was mainly due to paying off the USDA loan on December 31, 2014 for the police cars. The City's portion for the payoff of the cars was \$44,360.53. The City took the funds out of the General Fund instead of using SPLOST Funds, due to the extensive work on the Southside Drive Project. We also able to move \$50,000 from the General Fund as well and transfer \$25,000 each into the Combined Utility and Combined Savings Accounts. The yearend balance for First State Bank combined savings is \$580,485.21. The yearend balance for Commercial State Bank combined utility sinking fund is \$431,356.94 and DOT State Reimbursement is \$107,789.62. The combined balance at Commercial State Bank is \$539,146.56. The yearend balance at Bank of Early LMIG is \$69,678.53. Total cash on Hand, not including General Fund, is \$1,119,631.77 excluding LMIG. The City Clerk is currently working with the auditor regarding fees from the 2014 audit, and has asked for a reduction of the fees for the service provided to the city.

## **VII) New Items Proposed By Mayor and City Council**

**Mayor Pro Tem** - A motion was made by Councilman Mills and seconded by Councilman Middleton to appoint Councilman Hutchins as the Mayor Pro Tem for the 2015 calendar year. The motion carried unanimously

**Reappointment of council representative to Public Safety Board** - Mayor Howard recommended Councilman Middleton and Councilman Hutchins continue on the Public Safety Board. A motion was made by Councilman Hutchins and seconded by Councilman Smith to reappoint Councilman Mills and Councilman Middleton to the Public Safety Board. Councilman Mills stated he would discuss his involvement at a later date. The motion carried unanimously

**Proposals from Paul Simonton & ECG appoint** - The City Clerk stated the issues regarding the altitude valve locate behind the Blakely Fire department. The proposal from Paul Simonton for location of valves and water lines to better understand how the water systems works (which valves control which areas and how the wells work together and how to improve the current system) was around \$13,000.00. ECG has also submitted a proposal for water and sewer line GPS mapping in the amount of \$25,500.00. The City Clerk suggested that the projects be combined, and completed at the same time. Mayor Howard suggested that this project is a necessity to form a better understanding of the City's water system. Councilman Mills had some questions regarding the usage of the GPS mapping and storage of the data. The City Clerk reaffirmed Councilman Mills that our system has a backup server, as well as reaffirmation from Danny Williams, Gas Department. A motion was made by Councilman Mills and seconded by Councilman Middleton to approve both the PC Simonton quote and the ECG quote.

**Mr. Wallace O'Neal to Planning Commission** - Councilman Hutchins spoke and asked Mr. O'Neal to serve on the Planning Commission Board. He will replace former Planning Commission Board member, Charlie Sol. A motion was made by Councilman Hutchins and seconded by Councilman Middleton to approve the appointment of Mr. Wallace O'Neal to the Planning Commission Board. The motion carried unanimously

**Bases of Selection for Admin and Engineer for CDBG** - The City Clerk stated that we had two sets of proposals come in for Admin and three for CDBG. Mayor Howard discussed the selections with the Council. PC Simonton and GW Hudson were score the highest, with Polyengineering, EMC and Grant Specialists scored the lower. A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Smith to approve PC Simonton as engineer and GW Hudson Consulting as administrator. After reviewing the scoring sheets there was then some discussion between the Council on how the scoring is done. Mayor Howard stated that he had reviewed the score sheets. He then stated that he felt that the City has gotten good results from Mr. Simonton and Ms. Hudson work on past CDBG's. The motion carried unanimously

The Mayor updated the continuing education status of Municipal Judge Mills, and he has completed his training for 2015. The City should continue to use Judge Mills for his services. A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Smith to continue the agreement with Judge Mills. The motion carried unanimously

The Council was asked by The Mayor to approve the City's holiday schedule. The motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Hutchins to approve the holiday schedule as presented in the employee handbook. The motion carried unanimously

Councilman Middleton spoke to the Council regarding changing the hours, for Saturday night closing on Church Street, from 1:30am to 2:00am. A motion was made by Councilman Middleton for the City Attorney to change the ordinance. The motion died due to lack of a second.

The Council discussed the length of terms each Councilman serves.

The City Clerk was questioned in regard to LiHeap funds by Councilman Hutchins, and why the funds are no longer being applied to the customers' entire utility bill. He stated that surround counties were applying the funds to the customers' entire utility bill. The City Clerk explained to the Council that the funds can only be applied to Electric and Gas portion of the customer's bill, and the steps we have taken to notify the customers and the National Service Center. The Council determined it would be in the customers' best interest for the LiHeap funds continue to be sent to the City of Blakely.

**VIII) Public Comments**

The City Clerk was again questioned regarding the distribution of the Liheap funds. She explained that the contract only pays Gas and Electric, and that the National Service Center was notified before we started receiving funds. Customer was concerned Early County was the only county to not accept the LiHeap funds as a whole. Councilman Mills asked that the City have the contract AVAILABLE FOR customers to view.

Mike Newberry addressed the Council and stated the Peanut Proud appreciates the City's assistance and restated that they will need help again this year, because March 8th will be here soon.

Councilman Mills addressed the Council and stated that he was resigning from City Council. He stated that January 31, 2015 or a few weeks into February 2015 would be his last roll as a Councilman. Mayor Howard thanked Councilman Mills for his many years of service to the City. Councilman Hutchins spoke in REGARD COUNCILMAN Mills tenure with the City. A motion was by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Hutchins to accept Councilman Mills's resignation. The motion carried unanimously

The Council had a brief discussion regarding the Election Board, and the current agreement between the City and the County. A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Smith to approve the agreement present by the City Attorney with the stipulation that the County may have some changes. The motion carried unanimously

Mayor Howard suggested paying off several bonds for the City early due to high interest rates. He stated that the City could save money if we pay the debt off early. The City Clerk stated that the City had two other debts that would still be on the financials for the Water Treatment Plant and the purchase of garbage trucks.

**IX) Executive Session – personnel evaluations**

A motion was made by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Smith to enter into Executive Session. The motion carried unanimously

**X) Adjournment**

A motion was by Councilman Middleton and seconded by Councilman Smith to adjourn the January 6th City Council meeting. The motion carried unanimously by Councilman present.

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Anthony Howard, Mayor