

REGULAR MEETING – CAIRO MAYOR & COUNCIL – OCTOBER 22, 2018

The October 22, 2018 Regular Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Room at 101-B North Broad Street by Mayor Pro tem Robert L. Gwaltney. Present were Council Members Demario J. Byrden, Jerry L. Cox, James H. Douglas, and Lannis Thornton. Mayor Booker T. Gainor joined the meeting later. Staff Members present were City Manager Chris Addleton, City Attorney Thomas L. Lehman, City Clerk Carolyn Lee, and Fire Chief Bill Schafer. Also in attendance were Cairo Messenger Editor, Randy Wind, and Times Enterprise Reporter, Erik Yabor.

INVOCATION: The Invocation was given by Councilman Cox.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion to approve the agenda with an addendum was made by Councilman Thornton, seconded by Councilman Douglas, and approved unanimously by all Council Members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Councilman Byrden, seconded by Councilman Douglas, and approved unanimously by all Council Members.

DELEGATIONS:

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Special Event Permit: MLK Parade on January 21, 2019 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. - MLK Collaborative - Douglas Addison, Jr. Applicant. After review, motion to approve the event was made by Councilman Thornton, seconded by Councilman Douglas, and approved unanimously by all Council Members.

Special Event Permit: MLK Community Candle Light Prayer Vigil Walk from Washington Middle School down MLK to Holder Park (Block Street) on January 20, 2019 from 8:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - MLK Collaborative - Renee Gee Theophille, Applicant. After discussion, motion to approve the event was made by Councilman Thornton, seconded by Councilman Byrden, and approved unanimously by all Council Members.

Addendum:

Special Event Permit: Organizing Grady County – Voter Registration Rally, Davis Park on Saturday, October 27th, 2018 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Council discussed and asked if the event was a “voter registration rally” since the registration period had already closed for the upcoming election. Someone in the audience offered that the purpose was not to register voters, but to encourage people to go vote. After review, motion to approve the event was made by Councilman Thornton, seconded by Councilman Douglas, and approved unanimously by all Council Members.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

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Disaster Funds from MEAG Municipal Competitive Trust. City Manager Addleton requested approval to withdraw up to \$1.0 million from the trust for expenses associated with Hurricane Michael. The initial draw would be \$500,000, with additional withdrawals as needed. Reimbursement funds received from FEMA would be deposited back into the trust account. Motion to approve the withdrawal of funds up to \$1.0 million was made by Councilman Douglas, seconded by Councilman Cox, and approved unanimously by all Council Members.

Waiving of Utility Bill Late Charges. City Manager Addleton advised that Mayor Gainor had requested consideration of waiving late fees in October because of the financial impact of Hurricane Michael on residents. He stated that it would be easier to waive the fees en masse than on an individual basis and recommended starting with Cycle 2 in October and going through Cycle 4 in November. After review, motion to approve the waiver was made by Councilman Thornton, seconded by Councilman Douglas, and approved unanimously by all Council Members.

Deputy Grady County Emergency Management Director. Mayor Gainor arrived at this time and presided over the balance of the meeting. EMA Director Richard Phillips, along with Cairo Fire Chief Bill Schafer, were present regarding the recent recommendation by Director Phillips for the County Commission to appoint Chief Schafer as Deputy EMA Director to assist Director Phillips. When asked by Mayor Gainor if it would be a paid position, Mr. Phillips advised that all day-to-day paperwork would be done in his office, with Chief Schafer assisting only in emergency or crisis events. He would assist as a second contact in communicating with GEMA if Director Phillips was unavailable. City Manager Addleton advised that he would not be paid by the County, and it would be up to the Council if they wanted to pay him something or not, with Councilman Douglas stating that he did not think it would be a paid position. Mayor Gainor asked if the Council had read the emergency manual, as he had seen some things in it that needed to be looked at before a decision was made. He asked that a decision be delayed until after the post-action meeting which had not yet been scheduled. Councilman Cox asked if the manual was a City or County manual, learning that it was a County EMA document. Director Phillips advised that Chief Schafer would also be required to complete some further training, with Chief Schafer expressing that nothing would really be changing. It would just allow him to officially be a back-up to the director, and his job as Cairo Fire Chief would come first. There would be three exercises annually, with two having already occurred. Mayor Gainor commended Chief Schafer, adding that a person with lower stature or some other administrator, might be a better choice. Councilman Byrden asked if it would be hard to be Fire Chief and EMA Deputy Director. Motion was made by Councilman Douglas to confirm the appointment of Fire Chief Schafer as Deputy EMA Director as recommended. Motion was seconded by Councilman Cox. Mr. Emory Thomas, a member of the audience, interrupted and wanted to speak. Atty. Lehman advised Mayor Gainor that it was not proper procedure to allow a citizen to speak during the middle of a debate between Council Members. However, Mayor Gainor allowed Mr. Thomas to speak. He felt some things in the black community had not been addressed and suggested that a black member of the community be appointed in the position. Councilman Byrden requested to make a motion to table the matter to consider other qualified people. His motion died due to lack of a second. Councilman Douglas's motion to appoint Chief Schafer passed 4-1, with Councilman Byrden voting against. Mr. Phillips was commended for his service throughout the hurricane event, and Councilman Douglas suggested that the Council consider a resolution acknowledging Director Phillips for his service. Mayor Gainor commented that he could not for someone who turned down the Red Cross.

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Airport FY 2020-2024 Capital Improvement Plan. City Manager Addleton advised that the 5-Year Plan was required by the DOT and was due October 31st. He added that, due to funding and time restraints, some projects in 2020 would drop to the following year. Councilman Douglas noted that some could be included in TSPLOST. After discussion, motion to approve the plan was made by Councilman Douglas, seconded by Councilman Gwaltney, and approved unanimously by all Council Members.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Reports:

1.) Reports from City Manager:

- Storm debris was being removed, with Taylor Waste initially concentrating on main streets and around schools and then moving to the residential areas.
- Debris staging was at the Landfill, with chipping to start on Tuesday.
- The Army Corps of Engineers contractors would be coming to help with debris clean-up, possibly starting on Friday. Mayor Gainor asked City Manager Addleton if fees could be waived for debris from the County also, with City Manager Addleton believing that it would be too overwhelming. Director Phillips reported that he was to meet with the Corps on Tuesday morning and would know more afterward.
- Employee litter pick-up would be rescheduled to another date.
- Action was taken, upon motion by Councilman Thornton, second by Councilman Gwaltney, and passed unanimously, to recommend that Trick or Treating be suspended at dark on Halloween due to debris and downed lines on rights-of-way.
- The Mayor and Council and City Manager Addleton commended the efforts of all crews during the hurricane. Councilman Cox suggested sending a note of gratitude to the out-of-town crews.

2.) Reports from Mayor and Council:

- Councilman Douglas asked that the Police Dept. report the location of debris that was obstructing signs or in the road.
- Councilman Byrden asked that ways be identified to effectively communicate with residents during events like the hurricane, such as on Facebook, the website, or a robo phone call system. City Manager Addleton added that warning calls went out on Wednesday evening from the after-hours service, but that there was no reverse 911 available. Councilman Cox asked to be made aware of any customers that thought they might have been slighted during the recovery efforts. It was noted that the AMI system allowed the City to know which services were active or inactive, and there were now 25 that had damage and had to be repaired before power could be turned back on.
- Mayor Gainor expressed that Chief Schafer should be the EMA Director, not the deputy Director. He referred to a town hall meeting set for November 3rd at Yo-Yo's Wings-N-Things where he would share the rest of his comments.

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ADJOURN: There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Douglas to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Thornton, and approved unanimously by all Council Members.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

BOOKER T. GAINOR, MAYOR

CAROLYN B. LEE, CITY CLERK