

REGULAR MEETING – CAIRO MAYOR & COUNCIL – APRIL 9, 2018

The April 9, 2018 Regular Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Room at 101-B North Broad Street by Mayor Booker T. Gainor. Present were Mayor Pro tem Robert L. Gwaltney and Council Members Demario J. Byrden, Jerry L. Cox, James H. Douglas, and Lannis Thornton. Staff Members present were City Manager Chris Addleton, City Attorney Thomas L. Lehman, and City Clerk Carolyn Lee. Also in attendance were Cairo Messenger Editor, Randy Wind, and Times Enterprise Reporter, Jordan Barela.

INVOCATION: The Invocation was given by Mayor Gainor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Regular Meeting – March 26, 2018. Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Councilman Byrden, seconded by Councilman Thornton, and approved unanimously by all Council Members.

DELEGATIONS:

1. Mr. Stephen Bible – Airport Operator. Mr. Bible reported on the Easter Egg Hunt held recently. He stated that they had learned a lot of things this first year of the event being held at the Airport that could help them in planning for next year and introduced Ms. Courtney Cannon, Lower Hawthorne Trail, who shared her ideas. She stated that she had taken her children to the event and ended up volunteering to help. Since there were many more people attending the hunt this year, she suggested having more activities next year, in addition to setting up barricades, dividing participants into age groups, and adding more trash cans. Mayor Gainor agreed with these suggestions, noting that it had been a great event with good weather and was well-attended. Atty. Lehman suggested that the supporters of this event should decide who the coordinators should be and who needed to be involved, as well as submit their needs 30 to 60 days in advance of the event date. City Manager Addleton advised that barricades and trash cans could be provided, and some security might be needed. Mr. Bible replied that the Sheriff's Department did have a couple of people there. Councilman Byrden added that moving the event to the Airport had brought more people than it did at Holder Park, but plans would be made next year to accommodate the crowd.

2. Mrs. Kay David, 56 22nd Street, NE. Mrs. David informed the Mayor and Council that she was very passionate about safety, especially in her neighborhood. There were also eight other residents of the area present in support of her request. She presented a map of her area showing eight blocks of Karoga Estates, with streets intersecting with MacIvor Drive. She advised that MacIvor was being used as a "cut-thru" between Hall Road and 20th Street. In spite of Speeding, "No Thru Trucks," and "Children at Play" signs, the road was still being used by semi-trucks that were not making deliveries in the neighborhood, as well as speeding vehicles, making it unsafe for walkers, runners, and baby strollers. She asked that the Council look at 23rd, 24th, 25th, and 26th Streets, adding that the intersection of 24th and MacIvor was the crest of the hill. She requested that 4-way stop signs be installed to slow traffic at least at the 24th and 26th St. intersections with MacIvor Drive.

3. Mr. Jerry Mobley – Paving of Street. Mr. Mobley was not present.

SPECIAL EVENTS: None

OLD BUSINESS: None

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NEW BUSINESS:

Utility Billing/Payment Option Alternative. Mayor Gainor reiterated that he had obtained information from City employees, as well as other professionals, regarding the proposal for a split billing that he believed would alleviate some of the financial burden on those needing it. He stated that it would not cost the City to separate the billing. If billed electronically, it would cost fourteen cents per bill which would be paid by the customer, and fifteen cents by mail. There were 159 customers currently signed up for electronic billing. Customer accounts would have to be in good standing to be eligible, and applications for electronic billing would need to be completed. He added that the number of reconnects could possibly increase, but if repeated, the fee could be increased. The proposed option would not be allowed until the AMI metering project was completed. Those customers who did not have internet or a smart phone could use the Library computers or Wi-Fi in Davis Park to access their bills. Councilman Douglas, who had already submitted an opinion by e-mail, believed there would be some administrative expenses to implement a change, and also an increase of bad debt. He added that he did not have a problem with the City Manager looking at the proposal since that was his job. Mayor Gainor stated that the numbers came from Faye Ingram and were not just his idea. City Manager Addleton advised that each truck-roll was \$30.00; and if CNS was cut off, it would roll back to the utility bill. Mayor Gainor noted that the cable would be increasing next month, and this proposal simply offered another option. Councilman Thornton offered a motion to table the matter, adding that it was the City Manager's job to present the option, but he also thought it would increase bad debt. Mayor Gainor reiterated that they both had the same numbers that he had presented. Councilman Thornton did not think the option would help the older customers who didn't do bill paying electronically but paid their bills at the first of the month. Councilman Cox stated that he believed the Mayor's objectives could be met with current procedures that provided for working with customers on legitimate pay plans. He added that the Council was not cold and unfeeling, but he would like to see staff talk about it as well as to educate the public on what was already available. He noted that he would like to see the current bill grouped by the different services, as well as surcharges that were required by law, so that it would be easier to understand. Mayor Gainor responded that, according to Thomasville and Camilla, bills could be color-coded for service groups. Councilman Cox suggested working up the application and guidelines for the option. The motion to table was seconded by Councilman Gwaltney. Councilman Byrden agreed that the option was not for everyone, and some households did have phones with internet access, or kids with phones, and could access bills electronically, pointing out that everyone could not afford to energy-proof their houses. Mayor Gainor advised that he had learned that elderly people could get an alternative due date if that would help them. After discussion, the motion to table the matter was unanimously approved by all Council Members. Councilman Douglas suggested that City staff should determine the costs associated and come up with the process, but it needed to come from the City Manager as that was his job. City Manager Addleton responded that he would be glad to formalize a plan to bring back to the Council. The motion to table passed unanimously by all Council Members.

OTHER BUSINESS: None

Reports:

1.) Departmental Reports for the Month of March 2018. Council discussed the reports, with Councilman Cox imparting some statistics on Cairo's "Safe City" status as well as crime rate statistics. He wanted to know how Cairo's pay rates for the Police Department

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compared with surrounding comparable cities before the budget process was completed. It was noted that the Landfill overtime was over-budget, with City Manager Addleton explaining that they had been moving dirt in anticipation of the Landfill closing. It was noted that the Police Dept. would be over-budget next month; but City Manager Addleton relayed that the budget included two officers that the department did not have, so that would off-set the overtime overage.

2.) Reports from City Manager:

- Announced that a joint County, Cairo, and Whigham meeting had been scheduled for April 12th at 9:00 a.m. at the Chamber of Commerce to discuss proposed SPLOST and an aquatic center. He added that he thought the county wanted to put the aquatic center back on the ballot to declare it infeasible. Per City Atty. Lehman, since it was a joint City-County project, the City would have to declare it infeasible as well. Councilman Douglas believed that if the Council did that, a lawsuit would also include the City, with Atty. Lehman advising that he would rather discuss the matter in executive session.
- Presented information on the Archway Community Leadership Retreat to be held in Thomasville on April 13th, with City Manager Addleton and Councilmen Douglas and Cox planning to attend.
- Gave out Natural Gas Surveys to complete and return.
- Scruggs, the paving contractor, had reported they would be back in the Northeast section this week.

3.) Reports from Mayor and Council:

- Councilman Byrden asked for a report on splash pad information and the pool situation. City Manager Addleton reported that he had talked with the repair company who had also built the pool, and it would take ten weeks to mobilize and make the repairs. He advised that Archway had some information on splash pads, but he did not see how the pool could open for the summer. He added that he had waited to see what the County was going to do about building an aquatic center before he looked at repairs, but it appeared now that they were not wanting to build a pool. Councilman Douglas offered that a wiser decision might be made by waiting. Councilman Byrden stated that people wanted a pool, and kids had nothing to do in the summer without one. Mayor Gainor recommended closing it for the summer and making repairs and updates, suggesting that a diving board be added also. City Manager Addleton reported that the board had been replaced three times, with Mayor Gainor responding that those were not durable and a certified board was needed. Councilman Cox suggested that a survey be done to determine if a pool or a splash pad was preferred, adding that if the pool was not opened this year, there would be time to get another bid. Councilman Gwaltney agreed that the pool should be closed for the summer and more bids obtained for repairs.
- Councilman Douglas stated that he was personally not in favor of 4-way stops on MacIvor Dr. He requested that the Police Chief look at accident reports there and patrol the street, and for City Manager Addleton to send a letter to area businesses to inform drivers that they were not to use MacIvor Dr. He added that the street was not designed for foot traffic since it did not have sidewalks, and that he did not see many semis using it anymore unless they were lost.
- Councilman Thornton reported a washed out place next to a deep ditch on 8th St., NW in the 600 block.
- Councilman Gwaltney asked that a trash can be placed near the upper playground equipment at Davis Park.

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EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 6:55 p.m., Councilman Cox made motion to go into executive session to meet with Attorney Lehman to discuss a potential lawsuit or administrative proceeding or other judicial action brought against the City. Motion was seconded by Councilman Byrden, and passed unanimously by all Council Members.

At 7:25 p.m., motion was made by Councilman Cox to end the executive session, seconded by Councilman Thornton, and passed unanimously by all Council Members.

There was no action taken as a result of the session.

ADJOURN: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

CAROLYN B. LEE, CITY CLERK

BOOKER T. GAINOR, MAYOR