

REGULAR MEETING – CAIRO MAYOR & COUNCIL – NOVEMBER, 28, 2016

The November 28, 2016 Regular Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Room at 101-B North Broad Street by Mayor Robert B. Burns, Sr. Present were Mayor Pro Tem James H. Douglas, Council Members Ernest W. Cloud, Jr., Jerry L. Cox, Robert L. Gwaltney, and Lannis Thornton. Staff Members in attendance were City Manager Chris Addleton, City Attorney Thomas L. Lehman, City Clerk Carolyn Lee, Public Works Director Raymond Stokes, and Energy Services Director Rod Prince. Cairo Messenger Editor, Randy Wind, and Times Enterprise Reporter, Jordan Barela, were also in attendance.

INVOCATION: The Invocation was given by Councilman Douglas.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Regular Council Meeting – October 24, 2016. Motion to approve minutes as submitted was made by Councilman Cloud, seconded by Councilman Douglas, and unanimously approved by all Council Members.

DELEGATIONS:

A large group of northwest neighborhood residents was present regarding the MEAG project for updating of poles for transmission lines through the northwest section of town. Douglas and Mary Beth Kirkland of 625 12th Ave., NW were present, and Mr. Kirkland narrated a power point presentation showing the tall poles to be used. He stated that they had first learned from the Cairo Messenger that easements were obtained from the City at the September 12th meeting. After attending the next Council meeting to express objections to the large poles and the route to be taken, another meeting was held with MEAG who was undertaking the project. MEAG had agreed to try to renegotiate the Harrison/Derby easements but had reported that they were unsuccessful. Mr. Kirkland stated that MEAG had sent pictures to some residents of the types of 95' poles that would be used in the area, but the pictures sent were taken in rural, not urban, areas. The lines were currently running over the Harrison/Derby ponds and ran north and south; but the new route would have poles running along the street across from the Renaud, Chason, and Kirkland houses. He added that the lines would make buzzing noises when moisture touched them and did not belong in a neighborhood setting. In closing, he requested the Mayor and Council to help the residents in their fight.

Mr. Charles Renaud, 1325 5th St., NW, stated that this matter was directly affecting the citizens in the area, adding that 52 years ago the area was not as residentially developed as it was now. He had asked MEAG for cost estimates to run the line underground, as well as why they could not leave the line where it was. He asked the Council to serve the citizens, and let MEAG deal with the cost.

Ms. Claire Chason, whose mother lived on 6th St., NW, expressed her belief that the City should have some influence with MEAG, asking if other cities had these big poles in their neighborhoods. In closing, she asked the Council to represent the citizens.

Mrs. Mary Beth Kirkland stated that she would have liked to have been informed of the project and requested that another plan be considered to do what was right for the residents.

Ms. Louisa Perkins, daughter of Mr. Fred Perkins, 11th Ave., NW, as well as Mrs. Gail Sorrell, daughter-in-law of Ms. Lugene Sorrell, 6th St., NW, were concerned that the poles could impact property values.

Mayor Burns thanked the group for their comments, adding that he wasn't sure what the Mayor and Council could do since MEAG seemed to be determined on the route. He added that Claire Chason, Attorney for the EMC, was probably the most versed dealing with utility

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easements and might could make suggestions. Mrs. Kirkland expressed that the project hinged on the easements that the City had agreed to; and if the easement on the triangle lot was taken away, the project would change. Atty. Lehman advised that MEAG could still condemn it. Mr. Renaud pointed out that there were two other easements, with Atty. Lehman advising that MEAG would have to agree to the easements being rescinded.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Special Event Permit for NAACP Grady County Branch - Demonstration on Monday, December 5, 2016 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. on 5th St., SE between Syrupmaker Drive and 4th Ave., SE on sidewalk at CHS - John Monds, Applicant. (Councilman Cox left the dais and did not take part in discussion or voting on this item due to his affiliation with the Board of Education). Mr. Monds, 1017 Old Thomasville Road, stated that the demonstration would be a peaceful protest on the sidewalk regarding the recent termination of a guidance counselor at CHS, so that people would not forget but keep it in the public eye. He estimated that there would be up to 25 participants. Councilman Douglas stated that he could not approve the hours of 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. due to a safety issue, since that was a very busy time and congested area with school letting out and students and buses leaving. He suggested that Mr. Monds adjust the time to possibly 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. Mr. Monds replied that he had picked the time for visibility and believed safety concerns to be minimal as they would not be blocking traffic, and the adults would know when to step aside for students to pass on the sidewalk. The exact location for the demonstration was also clarified. After discussion, motion was made by Councilman Cloud and seconded by Councilman Thornton to approve the request as submitted. Motion to approve the event was denied, with Councilmen Cloud and Thornton voting in favor of the motion, and Councilmen Douglas and Gwaltney voting against. Mayor Burns broke the tie with a “no” vote.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

Public Hearing – Rezoning Request from C-1A (Restricted Office-Institutional District) to C-2 (Highway Commercial District) at the location of 8th Ave., NE – County Tax Map C21, Parcel 73.1 – Applicant: Hobson Automotive, LLC. Mr. Bob Hobson was present and stated that he wished to use the lot across the street from his business at 150 8th Ave., NE to expand his parking and auto sales. Councilman Douglas asked about erosion concerns which had also been addressed at the Planning Commission meeting, with Mr. Hobson stating that they were looking at sod or shrubs for the lot.

Rezoning Request from C-1A (Restricted Office-Institutional District) to C-2 (Highway Commercial District) at the location of 8th Ave., N. E. – County Tax Map C21, Parcel 73.1 – Applicant: Hobson Automotive, LLC. Both the Planning Commission and the SWGRC had recommended approval of the rezoning to C-2. After discussion, motion to approve the rezoning was made by Councilman Cloud, seconded by Councilman Douglas, and unanimously approved by all Council Members.

FY 2016 Financial Audit Presentation by Tom Carmichael of Carr, Riggs & Ingram, LLC. The audit summary was presented by Mr. Tom Carmichael who announced that the final draft would be circulated later in the week. He described the risk-based audit approach along with standards required in performing the audit, explaining that some audit procedures involved compliance testing of accounts receivable and revenue recognition, as well as testing of accounts payable for unrecorded liabilities, and testing of sales tax expenditures. Revenue for FY

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2016 in the General Fund was \$4,045,000 which was \$173,000 over the budgeted amount of \$3,872,000. Expenses came in under the budgeted amount of \$7,788,000 at \$7,124,000. The deficiency was \$3,079,000 before operating transfers of \$3,417,000 rolled in from the Enterprise Funds, resulting in a surplus of \$338,000 in the General Fund and an ending balance of \$6,263,000. Regarding the Water & Sewer Fund, revenues were up from 2015 at \$2,900,000, and expenses went down to \$3,015,000, with an operating loss of \$115,000. After transfers in of \$1,756,000, the result was a surplus of \$1,409,000 and a net position at end of year of \$11,364,000. There was an increase in the Electric Fund revenues over 2015 at \$21,190,000. Expenses decreased to \$14,408,000 for an operating income of \$6,782,000 before transfers out of \$4,080,000 that resulted in a surplus of \$2,736,000 and a net end-of-year position of \$18,648,000. The Cable TV Fund had increased revenue to \$3,161,000, while expenses decreased to \$3,226,000. There was an operating loss of \$65,000, and after transfers in of \$46,000, there was a negative surplus of \$32,000 and a negative net year-end position of \$4,083,000. Mr. Carmichael also advised that the total long-term debt total was \$18,946,000 which included revenue bonds, capital leases, notes payable, net pension obligation, landfill closure, and compensated absences. In addition to the audit report, a separate report would be submitted that would address significant audit findings. In closing, he added that there had been no difficulties encountered with the audit. City Manager Addleton advised that the final audit would be considered at the next meeting.

AMI Meters Project (Retrofitting and replacing of approximately 4200 water meters and installation of AMI base station, hardware, and software allowing automatic meter reading capabilities for the billing of water and sewer). City Manager Addleton summarized the benefits for all three sections which included reduced manpower by two meter readers and one billing position (\$120,000), reduction in truck rolls that currently averaged 4,000 cut-offs/cut-ons and re-reads annually (\$120,000), improved record keeping with data use available daily, enhanced customer service, ability to flag high or low use of utilities, ability to implement “pay as you go”, improve “read-to-bill” time, more revenue from meter accuracy improvement (\$109,000), eliminate versaterm system (\$6,000), and reduction in other costs of \$16,000; all for less than a five-year payback. His expected schedule would be to advertise for bids in December, award bids in February, and give a notice to proceed by March (with a 180-day contract). Funding consisted of a \$713,787 low interest loan and \$475,858 of principle loan forgiveness, for a total cost of \$1,189,645 for the water meters. The cost of electric and gas would be \$500,000 and \$300,000, respectively. Energy Services Director Prince added that electric and gas meters would be installed in-house so that each service could be inspected physically. Electric meters could be cut on and off remotely, and gas could be cut off remotely but not on. The total cost savings was estimated at \$360,000. Council Members discussed, with Councilman Cox asking questions and learning that the software would cost \$3,000, and also that the City would pay for the labor for change-out of meters. He also noted that there would be other future capital costs such as the retro-fitting and arsenic treatment at the MacIvor water plant and asked if this was the time to invest in this project. City Manager Addleton advised that, if the project was put off, there would be no guarantee that another loan with almost \$500,000 in forgiveness would be available later. Councilman Cox requested that, if the system was implemented, he be provided actual costs savings figures. Councilman Cloud reported that he had learned at a meeting he had attended in Savannah that cities were being encouraged to apply for GEFA loans while funds were available. After discussion, Councilman Thornton made motion, and Councilman Cloud seconded, to proceed with the bidding process for the project. Attorney Lehman asked Director Stokes how he felt about the project, with Director Stokes stating that it was a good move, adding that there would be a learning curve before reaping the benefits. He noted that there would not be remote ability for cutting off water meters, with Director Prince confirming that it would come later. Atty. Lehman asked if there would be any

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way that it would locate water leaks, learning that it would be an add-on cost but should make it easier to narrow-down the location of leaks. Councilman Gwaltney mentioned that Councilman Cox had asked some good questions, and he knew that the MacIvor water plant was a necessary project and would cost a lot; and something might have to be put-off. The vote was taken and motion passed, with all Councilmen voting in favor, except Councilman Douglas who voted against.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Councilman Cox made a motion to rescind three rights-of-way easements (that allowed deviation from the current route) given to MEAG at the September 12th meeting for transmission poles and to refund the money (\$12,811) received. One of the three easements was for the triangle lot and had been obtained from the City as well as the Stricklands due to unclear ownership. Motion was seconded by Councilman Gwaltney. Councilman Douglas asked Atty. Lehman what the legal consequences would be and if delaying the project would be detrimental to citizens. Atty. Lehman advised that the action would be issuing a strong opinion to MEAG, and it would still be up to them to agree. The motion passed, with Councilmen Thornton, Gwaltney, and Cox voting in favor; and Councilman Douglas voting against. Councilman Cloud abstained from voting.

Reports:

1.) Financial Report for the Month of September 2016. The report had been reviewed by the Finance Committee. Motion was made by Councilman Douglas to approve the report, seconded by Councilman Cloud, and unanimously approved by all Council Members.

2.) City Manager:

- Christmas Parade on Thursday, December 1st.
- Artisan Fair on Saturday, December 3rd downtown from 9:00 to 4:00.
- Congratulated Utilities Director Prince on his appointment to the Electric Cities of Ga. Board.
- Fire Dept. Christmas dinner on December 5th at 6:00 p.m.
- City luncheon on December 9th at noon.
- Airport water plant doing well in testing stage, with SCADA to be here next week, and hope to be running by end of December.
- Truck Route signs added on 4th Ave. and on Broad Street. Twenty-one citations had been written for “deviating from truck route” as of last week.

3.) Reports from Mayor and Council:

- Councilman Cox reported that an elderly woman was upset because handicap parking spaces were being used inappropriately, and he wanted to pass on the concern.
- Councilman Douglas asked Atty. Lehman about the status of the Hammett matter, with Atty. Lehman advising that he had reviewed the older 1990s documents, and the right-of-way had been surveyed and condemned. He also reported that Mr. Hammett had told him that he was going to be selling a lot of scrap, and that should improve things. Atty. Lehman advised that the next step would be to issue a citation.

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ADJOURN: There being no further business, Councilman Cox made motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilman Cloud, and unanimously approved by all Council Members.

ATTEST:

CAROLYN B. LEE, CITY CLERK

APPROVED:

ROBERT B. BURNS, SR., MAYOR