



## MINUTES

### REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

June 11, 2019 6:30 PM

#### **REGULAR MEETING:**

**Call to Order:** The June 11, 2019 Regular Council Meeting was called to order by Mayor David L. Jordan at 6:30 PM.

**Attendance:** Mayor David L. Jordan, Mayor Pro-Tem Keith Turman, Larry Bowen, Kenneth Roach, Matt Fields, Wayne Braswell, City Attorney Andrea Grant, City Manager Ed Andrews and Sharleen Ayers City Clerk.

**Approval of All Outstanding Minutes:** Wayne Braswell made a motion to approve the May 14, 2019 Public Hearing & Regular Meeting Minutes; Kenneth Roach seconded the motion; motion carried 6-0.

**Additions or Deletions to Agenda:** I. GMRC Reappointment

**Approval of Agenda:** Keith Turman made a motion to approve agenda; Wayne Braswell seconded the motion; motion carried 6-0.

**Main Street Update – Michael Crump:** Michael informed council that GA On My Mind day at Welcome Center. Looking at dates to participate in a GA On My Mind day at the Tennessee border. Ribbon Cutting Friday for You Never Know Variety. Anything & Everything Cell Phone Repair planning a Ribbon Cutting in July. Still Waiting for Farmhouse Flowers to schedule a Ribbon Cutting also. Summer Concert rescheduled date to be determined, perhaps a Back to School Weekend and concert instead.

#### **New Business:**

- A. **Audit Engagement Letter from Rushton & Associates, Ed Andrews:** No price increase. Same contract for this year at \$33,000. Single Audit will be \$5,000. We don't anticipate a need for a Single Audit at this time. Wayne Braswell made a motion to accept the Audit as presented. Larry Bowen seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.
- B. **SPLOST Amendment: Mayor Jordan:** Finance Committee, Mayor, Attorney, City Manager, and City Clerk met to discuss a proposed Amendment to SPLOST V with Franklin County. Big Question for Royston is do we need to borrow the money; do we need to go into debt for money we are not in immediate need of. Keith Turman presented that the purpose is to get the money up front for projects, but based on the financials of the City of Royston, we are not in need and have made our plans to use money as it comes available. He doesn't want to create a hardship for the City of Royston if it is not necessary. Wayne Braswell said if we had a project that needed financing right now, it would be worth the risk. Since we don't have any pressing projects, he did not see the purpose in putting the citizens of Royston at risk for an increase of taxes. Mayor said there were still questions and discussions about

when money would be available to us, and he did not believe there was enough information to make any decisions at this time. Basically, we would have to wait until the Bond Payments had been accumulated before any payments would come to us. If we wait, the money we get we will not have to pay back. If we participate in the borrowing, we will have to raise taxes to pay it back if the SPLOST comes up short. City Attorney mentioned the language was unclear, and she is waiting to hear from the attorney that was instrumental in creating the Amendment. She wants to contact another attorney with experience in bonds to review the proposal. We will come back to this later when better information is given to the City of Royston because at this time the council & Mayor do not want to take on any risk for the Citizens for Royston.

- C. **Sanitation Fee Schedule Adoption – Ed Andrews:** City Manager Ed Andrews presented a schedule of increased fees and White Goods charges. 3% increase in residential (.45 a month) & commercial customers. Increase of \$25 to \$50 in Roll off containers. Increase in White Goods fees – small increase per item and anything over 6 items would be a fee of \$75 since a small bin would be required to haul that number of items away. Waste Management sent out a letter stating their fees would be increasing due to a House Bill 792 passage. Increase of \$1 per ton for municipalities effective July 1, 2019. This is also part of the increase to help balance out the increase being passed on to the city. Proposed schedule accepted with typos fixed, to be put into effect July 1, 2019. City Manager emphasized these fee schedules need to be reviewed annually to reflect current conditions and needs. Keith Turman and Larry Bowen agreed that it needed to be reviewed annually & that citizens would rather have small increases more often than large ones far apart. Keith Turman made a motion to accept the increase fees and the schedule created by the City Manager. Larry Bowen seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.
- D. **Capital Asset Threshold Change – Ed Andrews & Sharleen Ayers:** Finance Officer asked for an increase in the Capital Asset Threshold as had been recommended by the Rushton and Company for several years. Increase for Buildings, Equipment, Vehicles, Furniture & Fixtures, and Land Improvements from \$2,000 to \$5,000 and Distribution Systems, and Bridges & Culverts to \$50,000. Schedule was provided to the council. Larry Bowen made a motion to accept the increases to the Capital Asset Threshold as proposed by the Finance Officer Sharleen Ayers. Keith Turman seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.
- E. **Credit Card Convenience Fees – Ed Andrews:** City Manager requested for Credit Card Convenience Fees for payments made online & by phone no longer be paid by the City but passed on to the customers. Normally that is passed on to the customer, and the expense to the City to cover these costs has become significant in recent years. Mayor asked how much the fees were. City Manager relayed the current price is 2.49 percent. There was some concern over timing. They requested a notice of 60 days before the fees be passed on. City Manager stated we could use a start date of Sept 1, 2019. Council asked if the City received the funds. Finance Manager responded that the fees were retained by the processing company and the City would only receive the billed amount. Keith Turman made a motion to amend the policy for convenience fees to pass them on to the customer at point of payment and the city would no longer pay them for the customers beginning Sept 1, 2019. Wayne Braswell seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.
- F. **Write Off Unpaid Property Taxes over 7 Years Old- Ed Andrews:** A list was provided to the Council of 2 properties still in collections over the 7-year limit allowed by the State of Georgia. The City would write off the initial tax of about \$210. These 2 properties have been in pursuit by county & city. One has been offered up for sale and did not sell. We cannot collect anything over 7 years by law, so the City Manager is requesting to write off the taxes due. The City Manager stated we had to keep on top of these processes to keep our records updated. Wayne Braswell made a motion to write-off the Unpaid Property Taxes over 7 years old. Lee Strickland seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

- G. Write Off Utility Billing Debt deemed uncollectible for deceased customers and bankruptcy-Ed Andrews:** City Manager relayed the total amount we are requesting to write off is \$28,240.87. City Council was provided a listing of the debts. These listing include amounts coming back from our collection agencies as deceased, no estate. Bankruptcies are those with paperwork to back that claim up. Motion was made to write of the balances totaling \$28,240.87 by Lee Strickland. Motion was seconded by Wayne Braswell. Motion carried 6-0.
- H. Proposal to create a Policy to write off balances due for Deceased Customers, Bankruptcy, and small balances-Ed Andrews:** City Manager relayed to council a need for a Policy to write off these balances that are due to deceased customers and bankruptcies and those amounts too small to pursue beyond the Cities regular collection efforts. A sample was read to the council members by the City Manager. Mayor Jordan agreed we needed a policy and recommended conferring with the city attorney to draw up a policy that will address Property Taxes and a separate policy for Utility Billing and other Receivables due to the City. Keith Turman mentioned it was not a large amount we were discussing, that the Tax Collections were close to 98%. A policy can be presented at the next meeting.
- I. Georgia Mountains Regional Commission Appointments for Franklin & Hart Counties- Mayor Jordan:** Mayor Jordan had received a letter requesting a notice of appointment or reappointment of representatives for the City. Gerald Voyles for Franklin county, and Bill Chafin for Hart County. Lee Strickland made a motion to appoint the named representatives. Kenneth Roach seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

**Unfinished Business:** None

**Other Business – City Manager Update:** ER Snell should resume paving in Royston in the next couple days. City of Royston is prepared for the paving. City Manger returned to the DOT to discuss the sidewalks. It was confirmed ER Snell was responsible for returning the sidewalks to original condition.

Sewer Plan update. Larry Bowen said it looked like everything was going well & we should be able to hit our target date. July 15 is still the target date Ed Andrews said. SOL Construction is about 2 weeks behind. The City Manager has had to reschedule some work to be done. He was also on the phone with the EPD to stay in contact with them in regard to levels and regulations for the wet tests. Mayor asked how many change orders we had processed. City Manager stated there were 3 change orders and only 2 were accepted. The Mayor emphasized that had to do with the efforts made to get things right in the beginning and good planning.

Hartwell Railroad has still only a verbal agreement to running water under the railroad to take water to Vanna. Railroad agreed to a lease at no charge to the city and the city would provide a water tap for the Railroad. Joey Dorsey was supposed to work with the Fire Department and a church that needed to provide an easement for the line. City has a petition with 30 plus names on it. Requests are being made regularly. City Manager is actively pursuing the process, but Hart County has to be in agreement as well. We are still in pursuit of the project.

Mayor mentioned the Council would be travelling to Savannah for the GMA Convention at the end of the month. Mayor discussed having a work session during the GMA Convention. It was decided to schedule the Work Session on Saturday after classes. A time of 3:45 or 4:00 PM. Mayor said they would find a room to hold the meeting. City Manager asked if there are any items needing to be added to the agenda that the City Clerk be informed.

**Executive Session:**

**Adjourn:** Wayne Braswell made a motion to adjourn; Kenneth Roach seconded the motion; motion carried 6-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:33 PM.

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**Sharleen Ayers, City Clerk**

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**Mayor David L. Jordan**

**(SEAL)**

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