

**JOINT MEETING
TIFT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS & CITY OF TIFTON
TUESDAY, AUGUST 22, 2017 AT 6:00 PM**

The Joint Meeting of the Tift County Board of Commissioners and City of Tifton was called to order by Gordon Manor of the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government on Tuesday, August 22, 2017 at 6:00 pm in the Civic Room of the Tifton-Tift County Chamber of Commerce. Members of the Commission present were: Chairman Grady Thompson and Commissioners Robert Setters, Greg Wood, Donnie Hester, Fred "Buck" Rigdon, Stan Stalnaker and Melissa Hughes. City Council present were: Mayor Julie Smith and Council Members Wes Ehlers, Frank Sayles, Jack Folk and Johnny Terrell. County Manager Jim Carter and City Manager Peter Pyrzenski were also present.

Commissioner Donnie Hester offered an invocation and Council Member Wes Ehlers led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag.

Gordon Manor, meeting facilitator, opened the meeting with instructions on how the meeting will be facilitated. He asked that everyone be respectful of each other, be recognized by the facilitator to speak, be brief with questions and comments, be mindful of not asking the same question over and over and repeating comments and be present and future focused. He also asked that the elected officials speak to each other and not the audience and media. Mr. Manor then asked the Chairman and Mayor to make opening comments.

Chairman Grady Thompson stated that this meeting was a good thing and is hopeful that the County and the City can iron out their differences.

Mayor Julie Smith was thankful for all who attended and wants to strive for a "win-win" for everyone. She looks forward to ongoing discussion and positive results.

Mr. Manor started the discussion by asking "What will it take to get these groups (County & City) to come together?" The following were items discussed in response to this question.

1. Too many people want to have power/egos
2. Better communication as board members and individually
3. Need to quit being stubborn
4. Need to compromise
5. Need to be fair
6. Need open, honest and civil dialog
7. Need a sense of community
8. Need to trust each other

Through this discussion, it was determined that there needs to be better communication and compromise for them to come together.

Mr. Manor then asked the question "What do we need to do to make these things happen?" The following items were discussed in response to this question.

1. Courtesy should be extended by responding to emails, texts or phone calls
2. Civil communication

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3. Quit accusing each other
4. Don't say anything negative about other elected officials in public or private
5. Need to provide the "facts"
6. Need to have an open mind
7. Need to work together
8. Share SPLOST lists
9. Need City to publicly state its intentions for the city/county water system

Through this discussion, it was determined that there needs to be more courtesy extended when a message is sent by replying to that message.

At this time, Mayor Julie Smith distributed two (2) different SPLOST scenarios. The Mayor committed that if SPLOST is on the November 2017 ballot the City is willing to meet with the County and have a fair, open discussion about water/sewer rates. County Manager Jim Carter stated that the SPLOST numbers presented by the City are close to the projections the County has. Mr. Carter felt with projections being similar that SPLOST could possibly be on the November 2017 agenda; however, Mr. Carter asked that the Mayor rescind her letter regarding the water/sewer agreement since the County feels this is important as part of the SPLOST negotiations.

After much discussion, both bodies agreed to have both the Managers work on an amendment to the current water and sewer agreement on Thursday and present it to them at another joint meeting on Friday, August 25, 2017. Time to be determined. Meeting to be held in the Civic Room at the Chamber of Commerce.

At the conclusion of the meeting. Mr. Manor asked "What are you willing to do to make this group come together?" The following responses were made.

Commissioner Hughes committed to open dialog.

Council Member Wes Ehlers committed to his willingness to sit down and talk about SPLOST.

Council Member Frank Sayles committed to keeping the door open.

Commissioner Robert Setters committed to sit down and debate and work out their issues.

Council Member Jack Folk committed to being willing to compromise and not say anything negative.

Commissioner Fred "Buck" Rigdon committed to?

Commissioner Greg Wood committed to being willing to negotiate.

Commissioner Stan Stalnaker committed to having an open mind and being willing to talk to each other.

Commissioner Donnie Hester committed to better communication and trusting each other.

Council Member Johnny Terrell committed to better communication.

County Manager Jim Carter committed to answer any emails he receives.

City Manager Pete Pyrzenski committed to be cautious of negativity.

Chairman Grady Thompson committed to trying to live up to the "envy" that other counties have of Tift County.

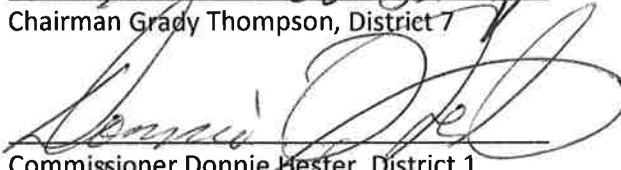
Mayor Julie Smith committed to having monthly meetings with the Chairman, County Manager and City Manager.

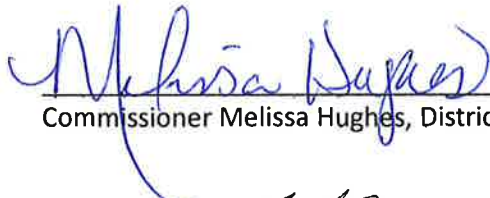
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After these commitments were made, the meeting was adjourned.



Chairman Grady Thompson, District 7

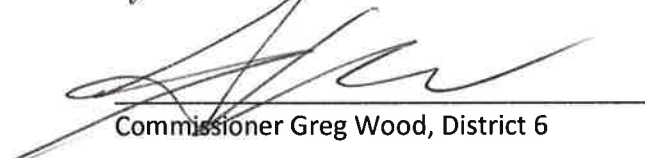

Vice Chairman Robert Setters, District 3


Commissioner Donnie Hester, District 1


Commissioner Melissa Hughes, District 2


Commissioner Stan Stalnaker, District 4


Commissioner Fred "Buck" Rigdon, District 5


Commissioner Greg Wood, District 6

ATTEST: 
September 18, 2017