

**CITY OF TIFTON  
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
MONDAY, JUNE 19, 2017  
5:30 PM  
TIFTON CITY HALL**

**Attendees**

Mayor Julie Smith  
Vice Mayor Wes Ehlers  
Council Member Jack Folk  
Council Member Johnny Terrell  
Council Member Frank Sayles

Pete Pyrzenski, City Manager  
Jessica Jones, City Clerk  
Rob Wilmot, City Attorney

**Public Hearing to Discuss Approved Activities of the CDBG Redevelopment Fund Program Grant Awarded to the City in the Amount of \$376,887.00**

Ms. Jessica Jones opened the public hearing by stating the City had received \$376,887.00 in CDBG Funds to assist with the acquisition and clearance of 325 and 327 Commerce Way. The City of Tifton will provide matching support for the project totaling \$183,732.00. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$560,619.00 and the funds will be used for property acquisition, clearance, and construction of a downtown parking area. CDBG Funds have been awarded and are available for the following activities:

- a. Approximately \$174,750 for Acquisition of Property (E-001-01)
- b. Approximately \$145,000 for Clearance (E-004-00)
- c. Approximately \$20,000 for Relocation Payments & Assistance (E-008-00)
- d. Approximately \$14,524 for Contingencies (C-022-00)
- e. Approximately \$22,613 for Administration (A-21A-00)

Public hearing was opened up for public comments and questions but no one spoke. Public Hearing was closed.

**Meeting Call To Order**

Mayor Julie Smith called the meeting to order and led the prayer and pledge.

**Approval of the Agenda**

Council Member Folk made the first motion to remove item #16 (Alcohol License for Gravity Pinthouse, LLC) from the agenda and approve agenda, motion seconded by Terrell, and unanimously approved.

**Approval of the Minutes**

Council Member Johnny Terrell motioned, seconded by Folk, and unanimously approved to accept the minutes from the May 15, 2017 Regular Meeting and June 5, 2017 Workshop.

**Proclamations Recognizing Linda Boyer and Beth Thacker on Their Retirement**

Mayor Julie Smith presented proclamations to Linda Boyer (30 years) and Beth Thacker (39 years) for their retirement from the City of Tifton. Chief Dowdy, Judge VanOrman, and Lon Kemeness spoke in reference to working with these ladies and wished them the very best on their retirement.

**Citizen Input**

No one spoke

Vice Mayor Ehlers arrived to the meeting.

**Consent Agenda**

Council Member Folk motioned, seconded by Sayles, and unanimously approved the consent agenda as follows:

- 4. **Ordinance Amending Meeting Times of the Tifton Planning and Zoning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals**
- 5. **Resolution Designating “The Great Race” as a Festival (2017-32)**
- 6. **Resolution Providing for the Disposal and Sale of Surplus Items (2017-33)**
- 7. **Resolution Declaring Fire Truck E-One Surplus and Authorizing the Sale of Property (2017-34)**
- 8. **Award of Proposal to Fire Recovery USA, LLC for Third Party Billing and Collection of Accident Recovery Fees and Authorize City Manager to Execute Agreement**
- 9. **Award of Bid to Griffin Ford for Five (5) New City Vehicles for Public Works and Gas Department**
- 10. **Award of Proposal to BS&A Software and Authorize City Manager to Negotiate Agreement**

**Resolution Adopting the FY2018 Budget (2017-35)**

Mr. Wayne Putnal reviewed the presented budget which was adopted as follows:

General Fund	\$ 13,378,801
Grant Fund	750,000
Hotel-Motel Tax Fund	1,107,700
Confiscated Assets Fund	15,000
Special Revenue Fund	33,000
Capital Projects Fund	1,021,069
SPLOST Fund	11,145,500
Tift Theatre Fund	305,382
Water Fund	3,563,200
Sewer Fund	3,846,513
Gas Fund	4,181,866
SWCD Fund	3,001,540
<b>Total FY 2018 Budget</b>	<b><u>\$ 42,349,571</u></b>
Internal Service Fund	605,611

Mr. Putnal mentioned the budget was balanced without using reserves, keeping the same millage rate of 9.759 mills, not increasing any fees, and included reorganizing departments. Mr. Putnal mentioned the presented resolution is for adoption of the budget only. The official setting of the millage rate will take place in July once the final digest is received from the tax assessor’s office. After a brief discussion concerning staffing at the fire department, Council Member Terrell made the first motion for approval, seconded by Folk, and unanimously approved.

**Resolution Equalizing Base Water Rates for City and County Customers**

Mayor Smith read aloud the following statement on behalf of the City Council in reference to the long stemming issues between the City and County:

If you remember about a year and a half ago, the county began scrutinizing the City of Tifton as to how the Fire Department was being run and the county alleged they were not getting what they paid for. The county also told us that they were unable to work with certain members of our city staff so, hesitantly, we made the personnel changes which we were told would improve the working relationship between the City and the County while attempting to discover what we could do to improve the fire operations. To no avail, the county made a decision to spend over \$4.2M of public money to create a new fire department and abandoned the joint agreement we had in place. We accepted it and moved on. However, now looking back after making a few more personnel changes based off the claim that the county could not work with them and that these individuals were the problem for us not getting along. Today, ever after such changes, there has been no change in the County's willingness to work together for the common good of both city and county residents. In fact, I believe the lack of communication has gotten worse. This tells me that the problem is, and always has been, not with the City personnel but the current County Administrator, Mr. Jim Carter.

The resolution before the Council is a prime example. On March 6, 2017 the City made the decision to terminate the joint water/wastewater agreement with the County. It was determined by City Council that the agreement was outdated and that the City should operate its water/wastewater operation as a city only utility reverting back to the way it was before the agreement in 2005. However, in doing so, the City informed the County that it remains committed to continue servicing county residents and will continue to work with the County in considering further expansions and improvements to the water and wastewater system. This decision was based on what the Council considered best for its constituents while causing no adverse impact on County residents. Essentially, the decisions of past boards and commissions are no different than what decision is being made with respect to the interlocal agreement for water and sewer – things change over time. Notwithstanding the decision to terminate the joint water/wastewater agreement, the City has proposed in this resolution to equalize the base water rates between the city and county customers as a good faith solution since no action has been taken in over 10 years. This was mentioned to the County Manager and to the County Chairman four months ago but we never heard any comments about this until now. Our commitment would increase the monthly base rate of City residents from \$7.72 to \$9.11 and would reduce the base rate for County residents from \$11.49 to \$9.11. If that is not a fair start in working together, I am not sure what is.

Amazingly, the City's efforts to reduce the rates to County residents have been met with disparaging editorials in the paper by Commissioner Robert Setters and threats by Grady Thompson, County Commission Chairman to sue the City. Mr. Setters only told half of the story in his articles and I can't help but wonder if he speaks for everyone on the county commission. Just last year alone, the county attorney collected over \$330,000 in tax payer money; do you think another threat of a lawsuit is good for anyone except the county attorney?

Most disappointingly, the County Commission Chairman has informed me the County is not going to seeking calling for a referendum and public vote on SPLOST 6 this November. This could be considered a form of coercion, or maybe just dirty politics. Either way, if this happens this will not only adversely affect the residents of the City of Tifton, but Omega, Ty Ty and the County as well who rely on SPLOST funds for capital improvements. I am not willing to risk it and I know that the other cities are not willing to risk it either. Over \$60 million dollars were collected from this existing penny tax which benefited this community greatly. I do not see how this could be rational or how the county leaders could make such comments not to do this - I would encourage the public and our business leaders to start asking questions.

However, despite the misguided path the county manager is on, the City fully intends to maintain the direction and course of conduct which represents what is the best for the City residents while at the same time having full consideration of the needs and desires of the County residents when it comes to quality water and sewer services. We will continue to work towards what is good for our entire community, regardless of your address and that is my commitment to you tonight. The City of Tifton has been bullied too long and will not stand for it any longer. We again call upon the members of the County Commission to work with us in these efforts, to open the lines of communication so that reasonable minds can come together with ideas and solutions from which everyone will benefit.

Council Member Folk made the first motion to table the Resolution Equalizing Base Water Rates for City and County Customers until the July Workshop, seconded by Ehlers, and unanimously carried.

**Resolution Granting Enterprise Zone Incentives to Southwest Georgia Bank for Property Located at 205 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Street (2017-36)**

Vice Mayor Ehlers made the first motion for approval of the resolution and incentives as presented by staff. Motion seconded by Folk and unanimously approved.

**Resolution Issuing an Alcohol Beverage License to Fresco Italiano of Tifton, Inc. Located at 103 S. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue (2017-37)**

Ms. Jessica Jones mentioned the application is for a new business locating to Mr. Harpers renovated warehouse on Tift Avenue. Staff has reviewed the application and background on the owner and manager, and is recommending approval of the license. Council Member Folk made the first motion for approval of the resolution and alcohol license, seconded by Sayles, and unanimously approved.

**Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Execute the Hazard Waste Trust Fund Agreement (2017-38)**

Mr. Ricky Hobby mention the resolution will allow the city to receive reimbursement in the amount of \$26,200 for landfill monitoring fees. Mr. Hobby mentioned the city completed the application to receive this funding and this resolution will finalize the request. After review, Council Member Sayles made the first motion for approval of the resolution, seconded by Terrell, and unanimously approved.

**Approving Contract with 3G's Auction Company for City Surplus Auction**

Mr. Pete Pyrzenski mentioned the city requested quotes from auction companies to provide auctioneer services for the city's surplus sale on July 29, 2017. Mr. Pyrzenski mentioned the lowest quote was received from 3G's Auction Company. After a brief discussion, Vice Mayor Ehlers made the first motion for approval of the contract, seconded by Terrell, and unanimously approved.

**Board Report**

Council Member Terrell made the first motion to appoint Ms. Lamarice Taylor and re-appoint Ms. Julie Sharpe to the Planning and Zoning Commission, seconded by Folk, and unanimously approved.

Council Member Sayles made the first motion to appoint Chad Tullos to the Historic Preservation Commission, seconded by Ehlers, and unanimously approved.

**City Manager Report**

Mr. Pyrzenski mentioned the Streetscape 3 Project is moving along and Main Street should be ready in time for The Great Race event. Mr. Pyrzenski also gave an update on the 20<sup>th</sup> Street Project, which is behind schedule, but they have been in contact with the contractor and milling and paving of 20<sup>th</sup> Street

should begin very soon. He also asked Council if the meeting for July 3<sup>rd</sup> need to be changed because of the holiday. City Council stated they did not have any conflicts with the meeting date.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

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Julie Smith, Mayor

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Jessica Jones, City Clerk