

**CITY OF CALHOUN
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
DEPOT COMMUNITY ROOM
109 SOUTH KING ST
JANUARY 25, 2016 7:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

**PRESENT: James F. Palmer, Mayor
David Hammond, Mayor Pro Tem
Al Edwards, Councilman
Matt Barton, Councilman
Jackie Palazzolo, Councilwoman**

ALSO: Larry Vickery, Utilities General Manager; George Govignon, City Attorney; Paul Worley, City Clerk; Garry Moss, Police Chief; Jeff Defoor, Director of Electric Utilities

- 1. Mayor Palmer called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance.
A. Mayor Palmer gave the invocation.**
- 2. Mayor Palmer led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag.**
- 3. Councilman Hammond made a motion to approve the agenda and Councilman Edwards seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion approved.**
- 4. Councilman Barton made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2016 City Council Meeting. Councilman Hammond gave a second with all voting aye, motion approved. Councilman Barton made a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes of the January 11, 2016 City Council Meeting. Councilman Hammond gave a second with all voting aye, motion approved.**
- 5. Mayor's Comments:**
 - A. The Mayor and Council expressed their deepest sympathies on the passing of Luke Minton, a local fourth grade honor student at Calhoun Elementary School.**
 - B. The Mayor and Council also offered their prayers and support for Calhoun Recreation Director Kim Townsend as her husband was in the hospital due to a car accident.**
- 6. Public Hearings and Comments: None**

7. Old Business:

- A. Mayor Palmer conducted the second reading of a variance request to allow an existing building to be used as an animal clinic, 40 foot variance request from the west and south property line, for Barrett Investment Enterprises at a location of 639 Oothcalooga Street. The Zoning Advisory Board will meet on February 4, 2016. The Public Hearing will be on February 8, 2016.
- B. Mayor Palmer conducted the second reading of a variance request to allow a 25 foot variance from the required 75 foot side setback requirement for Calhoun First Baptist Church at a location of 411 College Street. The Zoning Advisory Board will meet on February 4, 2016. The Public Hearing will be on February 8, 2016.

8. New Business:

- A. Councilman Hammond made a motion to approve the budget calendar for Fiscal Year 2016-2017. Councilman Barton gave a second with all voting aye, motion approved. The approval of the budget calendar sets the second City Council meeting in June for the 20th.
- B. Mayor Palmer read a Special Event road closure request by the March of Dimes. The proposed march would occur Saturday April 30, 2016 beginning at 11:00am through 12:30pm. The march begins at BB&T Park on Piedmont Street down to the intersection of Piedmont and Hillhouse Street. Along the route on Piedmont, only the south bound lane would be closed. This event would coincide with BBQ, Boogie, and Blues. The March of Dimes is sponsoring the BB&T Park Kids Zone for this year's event. Councilman Barton made a motion to approve the special event road closure request. Councilman Edwards gave a second with all voting aye, motion approved.
- C. Mayor Palmer read a City of Calhoun and Calhoun Housing Authority (CHA) Cooperation Agreement for the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). The CHA would like to apply for a \$500,000 CDBG grant to rehabilitate and modernize 11 units. The CHA will act as the applicant and have the ultimate responsibility to assume all obligations under the grant agreement and supply all matching fund requirements. The CHA needs the City as a partner in the application process because only a qualified local government can apply for funding. Also, Calhoun Utilities is currently evaluating the possibility of adding a water and sewer replacement project to the joint application. Councilman Barton made a motion to allow the Mayor to sign the cooperation agreement. Councilman Edwards gave a second with all voting aye, motion approved.

9. Other written items not on the agenda: None

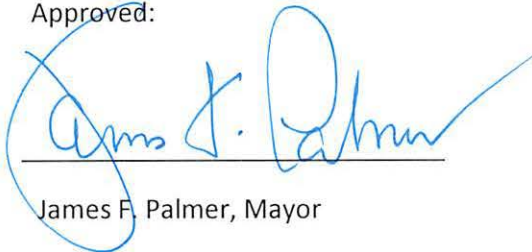
10. Work Reports:

A. General Manager Larry Vickery

- General Manager Vickery stated that the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG) held its annual meeting at the Mayor's Day Conference in which he and several others from the Council attended. Discussed at the meeting was an update from the new President and Chief Executive Officer James E. Fuller. Mr. Fuller discussed the ongoing construction and financing of Plant Vogtle. MEAG has been successful in securing bond issues at a very good rate. Also, there has been a settlement of a lawsuit with the construction contractors. Plant #3 is now scheduled to come online on June 30, 2019 and Plant #4 on June 30, 2020. This is three years behind schedule. Also, MEAG is looking to partner with local communities and explore the possibilities of installing solar panels to further reduce their dependence on coal.

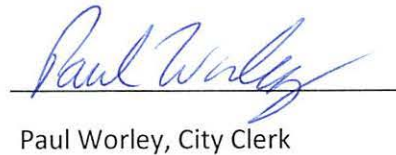
11. Councilman Hammond made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilman Barton with all voting aye, motion approved.

Approved:



James F. Palmer, Mayor

Submitted:



Paul Worley, City Clerk



**STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF GORDON
CITY OF CALHOUN
AFFIDAVIT REGARDING CLOSURE OF OPEN MEETINGS**

Personally appeared before the undersigned officer, duly authorized under the laws of the State of Georgia to administer oaths, Al Edwards, Mayor Pro Tem, who in his capacity as Chairperson or the person presiding over a City Council meeting of the City of Calhoun and after being first duly sworn, certifies under oath and states to the best of his knowledge and belief the following:

At its meeting held on 1/11/16 the Council's Executive Session voted to go into closed session and exclude the public from all or a portion of its meeting. The legal exceptions applicable to the exempt matters addressed during such closed meeting are as follows (Check or initial, as appropriate:)

- Discussing or deliberating upon the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action, dismissal, periodic evaluation or rating of a government officer or employee. [O.C.G.A §50-14-3(6)]
- Privileged consultation with legal counsel pertaining to pending or threatened litigation, claims, administrative proceedings or settlements. [O.C.G.A §50-14-2]
- Discussing the future acquisition of real estate, authorize negotiations to purchase, dispose of, or lease property. [O.C.G.A §50-14-3(b)]
- Staff meetings for investigative purposes under duties or responsibilities imposed by law. [O.C.G.A §50-14-3(1)]
- Tax matters made confidential by state law. [O.C.G.A §50-14-2]
- Inspection of physical facilities under the jurisdiction of the City Council. [O.C.G.A §50-14-1(a)(2)]
- Meeting with a governing body, officer, agent or employee of another agency at a location outside the geographical jurisdiction of the City Council at which no final action is taken. [O.C.G.A §50-14-1(a)(2)]
- Other (Explanation and citation to statutory authority required:)

I certify that the subject matter of the closed meeting or the closed portion of this meeting was devoted to matters of official business or policy within the exceptions provided by law as set forth above.

Paul Willey
Witness

Al Edwards
Al Edwards, Mayor Pro Tem

Sworn to and subscribed to before
me this 11 day of
January, 2016.



Misty Caudle
Notary Public for the State of Georgia

I am proud to say it has been a very successful year for the City of Calhoun.

Like all governments, we have faced some very challenging times and I have heard it said before, the way to measure a government's performance and the job it does is how it performs during the bad times and not the good. For this I think we deserve an A+. We have had to do more with less. We reduced each department's budget by at least 10% and this year every department came in under budget.

The department heads and staff deserve a lot of credit and elected officials should be pleased.

After a thorough financial review by Standard & Poor, we received a letter in August that raised our general obligation credit rating from A+ to AA- and reaffirmed out AA+ on general obligation debt.

Last year we raised our Freeport exemption to 40% and said we would study it each year with a goal of raising it every two years. This year after several meetings with the school, Dr. Taylor and Don Hood, we all decided this was a good year for another increase and we raised the exemption another 20%. This is important for economic and industrial development and we need to be competitive in Northwest Georgia and especially with our neighbors that are at 100%.

A few weeks ago I was asked to come to the school and meet with somebody that was considering the position of aquatic director. He wanted to ask three questions about our community.

1. The first was education and our school system. I am always proud to say we are a leader in public education.
2. Next was Healthcare. I told him Gordon Hospital has been named the number one small hospital in the state and it is in the middle of a \$27 million expansion. I would say our healthcare is excellent for a community our size.
3. And third, was it a safe community and one where his family would feel safe walking our streets. The answer is yes. It is a very safe community and as you ride around you will always see people walking.

I think any community would be glad to list these three things among their strong points.

The Calhoun Police Department received several grants throughout the year. One was from the Department of Public Health (Buckle up America) for \$10,000 worth of car seats. What do you do with and where do you store that many car seats? To help distribute these, they set up road blocks and each time someone came thru with a child not in an appropriate seat they were given one and properly

installed it. And they were sent on their way with a new seat instead of a ticket. If you have questions about the program please call the Police Department.

The Department also joined with the school to place a Resource Officer in the Calhoun School System.

The Police Department answered 61,000 calls from 911 and the Fire Department responded to 2,000 calls.

The Fire Department completed a training facility and improved the communication system that resulted in the ISO rating going from a 4 to a 3.

Hopefully this results in the lowering of insurance premiums, especially for industry. (Hopefully, it pays dividends in lowering insurance premiums.) The Fire Department has also acquired property on the North end of town for a fourth fire station when needed.

We were fortunate to be able to use SPLOST funds to buy several pieces of equipment. (street sweeper, boom mower, brush truck) . We also completed the renovation of the Library which was a joint City and County project.

Another joint City/County project is Peters Street. This is a very important project and one we are all excited about and one that really needs to be done. (High volume of vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic.)

We also completed the Linda Lane and East May Street project. This project provided more than one way in and one way out of the school complex and greatly improved traffic flow. SPLOST funds, along with Hotel/Motel funds were used for the Master Plan for Recreation.

Last year we hosted several events that included state tournaments as well as national qualifying events. They brought 3,000 participants and 7,000 spectators to our Recreation Department. These are people that stay, shop, and eat in our community.

Hotel/Motel funds will also be used for the lighting of Exit 312. This is a project that has been requested by the owner/operators and I'm pleased to say the last permit has been approved by DOT and work has begun.

Calhoun Utilities is one of the top 15 water producers in the state and we sell wholesale water to Floyd County, Pickens County, and Chatsworth. And each is looking for another connection. Our water and sewer rates are in the bottom 25% and our electric rates are the second lowest of all MEAG cities. We are completing a filtration project at Brittany Drive and Big Springs. This project will eliminate the high turbidity spikes – fine sand particles that could pass through and the need to recharge the filters for up to 12 hours after the power goes off. It increased our capacity by 6 million gallons a day. This capacity is not available year round, but

it is a permit that would have been lost because the State now requires that you have the ability to treat and store the water. It was said during the budget process, we won't need this capacity for 10 years. I prefer to think of this as short range planning. It is necessary to plan ahead as resources are limited and permits increasingly hard to get. It is projects like this that make us the only water supplier in Northwest Georgia expected to have adequate water supply by 2050.

Like many cities we must meet the challenges of replacing 60 and 70 year old infrastructure. Rome estimates their needs at \$60 million and Cartersville at \$80 million.

We have begun a replacement project at Mauldin Road as well as a galvanized line replacement project that is to be funded with a \$6.9 million GEFA loan.

We have proposed a 3% rate increase for 3 years. It is subject to budget approval and the increase would be earmarked for debt repayment and a possible Council approved project. This would allow the debt to be paid in 10 years at a very low interest rate.

MEAG and our Electric Department are installing a 4th substation on McDaniel Station Road. This provides better reliability and should increase the value of the surrounding property. The Electric Department received the highest rating from the American Public Power Association based on safety, reliability, and system improvements.

New projects will include Streetscape IV and the Peters Street Project. We would also like to accelerate our LED street lighting improvement program.

The millage rate today remains at 1.98. The taxes for City M & O on a house valued at \$200,000 would be \$158.40. There are 39 cities in Georgia with a population between 10,000 and 20,000. Their millage rate ranges from 3 to 14.74 with an average of 8.02. The taxes on this same \$200,000 house using the average millage rate would be \$642. In Dalton it would be \$507 and in Rome \$696.

Ron Littlefield, former Mayor of Chattanooga once said, "The way to make a community grow is to make it the best place it can be for the people already there." And we will continue working toward those goals.