

CITY OF NEWNAN, GEORGIA
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
2024

AUGUST 27,

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Newnan, Georgia was held on Tuesday, August 27, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. in the Richard A. Bolin Council Chambers of City Hall with Mayor Keith Brady presiding.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brady called the meeting to order and delivered the invocation.

PRESENT

Mayor Keith Brady: Council members present: Ray DuBose, Jim Thomasson, Cynthia Jenkins, Rhodes Shell, and Dustin Koritko. Absent – Paul Guillaume. Also present: City Manager, Cleatus Phillips; Assistant City Manager, Hasco Craver; Assistant City Manager, Meg Kelsey; City Clerk, Megan Shea and City Attorney, Brad Sears.

READING OF MINUTES

A. Minutes from the Regular Meeting on August 13, 2024

Motion by Councilman Koritko, seconded by Councilman DuBose to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting on August 13, 2024 and adopt them as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (6-0)

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

B. Swearing In of Youth Council Students

Councilwoman Jenkins began by thanking everyone. She said this group began in 2009 after legislation passed. She also thanked the members of the Youth Activities Commission who were in attendance as they are the ones helping to teach the students about government and leadership. And she thanked staff liaison, Mike Furbush, who has been with the commission since the beginning.

Councilwoman Jenkins called out the names of the new sophomore students joining the Newnan Youth Council, Mayor Brady presented them with certificates, and they were sworn in by the City Attorney.

Madi Allen (Northgate), Ellie Behm (Newnan), Dominic Chafardon (Heritage), Madi Rae Harris (Northgate), Jordan Jackson (East Coweta), Aarav Kadam (Woodward), Sadie Keith (Newnan), Ansley Lane (East Coweta), Kathryn Ross Pass (Newnan), Kate Sears (Newnan), Drake Strickland (Northgate), Kamryn Styles (Northgate) and Annie Glenn Winstead (Newnan).

Youth Council Attendees

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Councilwoman Jenkins called out the names of the Youth Council students who were attending the meeting, as they are required to attend one meeting per year. Jenna Mollner, Anna Beth Shelnutt, Alex Allen, Helena Gibson, Olivia Rodriguez and Brayden Williamson.

C. 1 Appointment – Bicentennial Committee

Continue to next agenda.

D. 1 Appointment – Christmas Commission, 3-year term

Continue to next agenda.

E. 2 Appointments – Keep Newnan Beautiful, 3-year terms

Motion by Councilman Koritko, seconded by Councilwoman Jenkins to reappoint Bill Boyd for another term.

MOTION CARRIED. (6-0)

Continue other appointment to next agenda.

F. 1 Appointment – Youth Activities Commission, 3-year term

Continue to next agenda.

CITY MANAGER

Mr. Phillips said that Ms. Norma Haynes wanted to invite Council to the Public Safety Luncheon on October 3rd at Coweta County Fairgrounds from 11:30am – 1pm.

NEW BUSINESS

G. Consideration of Municipal Court Appointment – Indigent Defense Attorney

Staff recommends Jim Strickland.

Motion by Councilman Shell, seconded by Councilman DuBose to approve the appointment as recommended.

MOTION CARRIED. (6-0)

H. Consideration of Engineering Services Master Agreement for Jefferson St. Roundabout Intersection Improvements

Michael Klahr, City Engineer, said this is for a Master Agreement with Heath & Lineback for a term of 6 years. There will be task orders for the various phases of the project. This agreement sets the framework for the Jefferson St. roundabout project.

Motion by Councilman Shell, seconded by Councilman Thomasson to approve the Engineering Master Agreement as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (6-0)

I. Consideration of Task Order No. 1 – Scope and Fees for Jefferson St. Roundabout Intersection Improvements

Mr. Klahr explained that this is the first task order, to include the concept report, environmental documentation, survey, preliminary engineering plans and right of way plans for the Jefferson St. roundabout project. The amount negotiated with Heath & Lineback is \$1,674,717.02. The Atlanta Regional Commission and GDOT have given the City \$1,252,728.75 and the City is then responsible for 20% of that and the balance which is \$250,545.75.

Councilwoman Jenkins asked if the scope of work will include what to do with the old intersection? Mr. Klahr said yes, there will be public open houses to get feedback. Mr. Klahr also explained that the concept plan in the agenda packet was from the 2019 TSPLOST when a consultant was brought in to help City and County present concepts. There was no survey done, this was a very early concept idea.

Motion by Councilman Shell, seconded by Councilman DuBose to approve the task order as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (6-0)

J. Presentation from Nichols Cauley of the Audited 2023 Financial Statements

Meg Kelsey, Assistant City Manager, introduced Greg Chapman with Nichols, Cauley & Associates, the City's audit firm.

Mr. Chapman said the 2023 audit was completed and submitted to the Georgia Department of Audits on time. This was their second year doing an audit for the City. He gave a little background information on the firm. They currently serve over 75 governmental entities across the state. Their job as auditors is to render opinion on the City's financial statements in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and Government Auditing Standards (GAS).

They did render an unmodified 'clean' opinion, meaning the financial statements are fairly presented. They also reviewed financial statement disclosures and found no issues and they had full cooperation from City Staff.

Audit adjustments can be needed from time to time, mostly due to timing of the financial statements and actual valuations that come in after. Auditors are independent with regard to the City and its finances. Mr. Chapman showed some financial trends including stable trends with Property Taxes and LOST. General Fund Expenditures show that the majority is for public safety then 31% for General Government (administration, purchasing, finance) then 15% on Community Development and 11% on Public Works. General Fund Balance showed a slight dip in 2021 due to the tornado but has been flat the past 2 years. 2023 Capital Investments were in public safety, parks and recreation and public works equipment and infrastructure.

No action needed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

K. Public Hearing – Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment – Article 11, Standards for Granting Variances

Mayor Brady opened the public hearing.

Dean Smith, Senior Planner, explained that this was brought to Council earlier in the Summer after it was discovered that what had changed regarding variances had not been changed. Staff looked at changing the language. This did go to Planning Commission and they recommended approval.

Councilwoman Jenkins asked if the changes would affect the Housing Authority or Habitat for Humanity building homes? Mr. Smith the Housing Authority is exempt as a government entity and Habitat for Humanity would have some administrative options that could help them, but it would depend on if it needed a public hearing, each is case by case basis. This language would not be to the detriment of those organizations. This language forces the applicant to think beyond just their project. One thing added was the impact to the community at large such as traffic. Mr. Smith did note that there are 5 cases waiting currently, pending the actions of Council.

Councilman Koritko asked what it means in the language where it says, “in substantial justice done”? Mr. Smith said it is for the good for the community and there is no violation of the ordinances.

No one spoke for or against. Mayor Brady closed the public hearing.

Motion by Councilman DuBose, seconded by Councilwoman Jenkins to accept the recommendation of the Planning Commission.

MOTION CARRIED. (6-0)

Motion by Councilman Thomasson, seconded by Councilman Shell to adopt the ordinance amendment as presented. 2nd and Final Reading 9/10/24.

MOTION CARRIED. (6-0)

VISITORS, PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS & COMPLAINTS

L. Request from Historical Society to Renew Lease Agreement for 27 Clark St.

Larisa Scott, Executive Director at the Newnan-Coweta History Center began by introducing Harry Camp, President of the Board, Dr. Mark Jansen, Head of Museum Studies at UWG and Jenny Enderlin, Board member, who were all in attendance. Ms. Scott explained that Mr. Phillips

encouraged them to come and tell Council how they are using the space at 27 Clark St. and what their plans are for the future. She expressed their gratitude to the City for their partnership and assistance over the past 55 years.

Ms. Scott explained that they operate the McRitchie Hollis Museum and the Historic Train Depot and then house their archive collections at the 27 Clark St. building. They have 3 full time employees. The building at 27 Clark is owned by the City and partially maintained by the City and partially by the history center. The collections building is a meticulously maintained repository and archive of all things Newnan and Coweta, dating back to the first settlers. Post-COVID the museum has seen an upswing in visitors and tours. In 2023 they had 4,242 visitors and in 2024 so far, they have had 2,298.

Ms. Scott said they would like to educate Council as to what goes at 27 Clark St. and have them come for a tour. In the coming months they have tornado project people coming, sports hall of fame board meeting, lecture series planned and on-going research. They see the collections building and museum as a community asset together that belongs to the citizens. Ms. Scott then showed photographs of 27 Clark St. including main room, displayed documents and different exhibits. She also showed photos of how they use the space as a working space to catalogue and tag items.

Councilman Thomasson asked if looking 5-10 years into the future, is the 27 Clark building adequate for their needs? Ms. Scott said they use a lot of the space and have cleared a lot of space, and more space could be made in the main room. If they were to get a large donation from someone, they would have to manage the space to get it to fit.

Mayor Brady said Council is in a tough position, they need space and so does the City. City Hall is totally built out and at capacity. Recently the City had to buy a new building to house the Sanitation Billing department and there are other departments that the public needs to be able to access.

Mr. Phillips explained that the conversation regarding the 27 Clark building goes back many years. There have been struggles with the humidity levels in the building and the City has made a lot of investment in new HVAC. Mr. Phillips said the lease currently expires at the end of this year. Councilwoman Jenkins expressed concern that it will take the history center time to figure out where and how to move things and there is also the bicentennial coming up and their collections will be needed.

Ms. Scott said there are certain museum standards, and they can't just throw things in boxes. It will be time consuming and expensive. She said it could be a 2-year process, to find a new location and properly pack things up.

Council discussed the humidity issues again and how that is a factor for preservation long term. Ms. Scott said there has not been any mold or issues with the humidity lately, the issue has stabilized. She said they are looking for ways to utilize the space better and they do move things around every 6-12 months with different exhibits.

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Council decided that they needed more time to consider this lease renewal and asked Ms. Scott to take what she heard tonight and come back with a lease proposal. Consensus was to put this on the next agenda.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Councilwoman Jenkins, seconded by Councilman Koritko that we now enter into closed session as allowed by O.C.G.A. Section 50-14-4 and pursuant to advice by the City Attorney, for the purpose of discussing legal and that we move, in open session to adopt a resolution authorizing and directing the Mayor or presiding officer to execute an affidavit in compliance with O.C.G.A. Section 50-14-4, and that this body ratify the actions of the Council taken in closed session and confirm that the subject matters of the closed session were within exceptions permitted by the open meetings law at 6:46PM. Mayor Brady and Councilman DuBose recused themselves due to a business conflict.

MOTION CARRIED. (4-0)

RESOLUTION/MAYOR'S AFFIDAVIT FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Councilwoman Jenkins, seconded by Councilman Koritko to adopt the resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute the affidavit stating that the subject matter of the closed portion of the Council was within the exceptions provided by O.C.G.A. Section 50-14-4(b).

MOTION CARRIED. (4-0)

COWETA COUNTY WATER & SEWERAGE AUTHORITY COUNTERCLAIM

Motion by Councilman Shell, seconded by Councilman Thomasson to authorize counsel to file a dismissal with prejudice as to the counterclaim raised against the Coweta County Water & Sewerage Authority, on the condition that the Authority votes to dismiss the underlying lawsuit against the City with prejudice, as evidenced by a public vote by the Authority.

MOTION CARRIED. (4-0)

ADJOURNMENT

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Motion by Councilman Shell, seconded by Councilman Koritko to adjourn the Council meeting at 7:28 pm.

MOTION CARRIED. (4-0)

Megan Shea, City Clerk

Keith Brady, Mayor