

CITY OF NEWNAN, GEORGIA
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

OCTOBER 8, 2024

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Newnan, Georgia was held on Tuesday, October 8, 2024 at 2:30 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, Rhodes Shell, Cynthia Jenkins, Paul Guillaume and Dustin Koritko (arrived late). 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 September 24, 2024

Motion by Councilman DuBose, seconded by Councilman Shell to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting on September 24, 2024 and adopt them as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (6-0)

B. Minutes from the Special Called Meeting on September 24, 2024

Motion by Councilman Shell, seconded by Councilman Thomasson to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Special Called Meeting on September 24, 2024 and adopt them as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (6-0)

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

C. 1 Appointment – Bicentennial Committee

Continue to next agenda.

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

Continue to next agenda.

E. 2 Appointments – Ethics Commission, 2-year terms

Continue to next agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

F. Public Hearing – Application for Alcohol Beverage License – J Holts Smokehouse – Retail on Premise (Pouring) Sales of Malt Beverages and Wine – 89 Temple Ave, Suite A – Reason: New Business

Mayor Brady opened a public hearing on the application for a Retail On Premise (Pouring) Sales of Malt Beverages and Wine for J Holt Smokehouse at 89 Temple Ave, Suite A.

A representative of the applicant was present for the hearing. No one spoke for or against the application. Mayor Brady closed the public hearing. The City Clerk advised that all the documentation had been received and everything was in order.

Motion by Councilman DuBose, seconded by Councilman Shell to approve the application for a Retail On Premise (Pouring) Sales of Malt Beverages and Wine License.

MOTION CARRIED. (6-0)

G. Presentation and Discussion Regarding Ordinance updates and fee schedules for Oak Hill and East View Cemeteries

Ray Norton, Public Works Director, explained that he is proposing some possible changes to the ordinances regarding city owned cemeteries and this is just to discuss and get guidance from Council. The sample ordinance that was drafted included the following changes: establishing an order in which persons have burial rights after owner passes away, giving the cemetery superintendent approval to compel lot owners to keep up trees and shrubs and give them authority to remove offensive or improper objects from a gravesite, limit monuments to 4 lots and require a permit. Mr. Norton explained that a monument is different than a headstone, it typically is larger and is more of a family marker. Council asked what problems this causes and Mr. Norton explained that they fill up the lots and make additional burials difficult.

He continued with other ordinance changes such as having the option for someone else to dig the graves, not just city staff, defining city holidays, and giving the City Manager the authority to approve more than one interment in a single lot.

Mr. Norton further discussed improper items and showed examples of gravel placed around a headstone and a makeshift border/fence around a headstone, wind chimes and solar lights. All these things make mowing and weeding more difficult and time consuming. He said there are guidelines currently regarding benches. He then showed pictures that included monuments vs headstones.

A fee comparison was shown with City of Newnan fees vs City of Griffin fees, as they also have a historic cemetery. The City of Newnan fees were much lower and so it is proposed to increase those.

There are SPLOST funds for cemetery improvements and one proposed improvement is to create either a mausoleum or a columbarium. Pictures were shown to illustrate the two, a mausoleum being able to hold a full casket and a columbarium being for cremains. There are a lot of changes happening in the funeral world, a lot more cremations and therefore people are looking for somewhere to put those that are not a full lot in the ground.

Mr. Norton then discussed multiple interments. Many cemeteries allow this and charge an interment fee but not a fee for a whole other lot. Double depth is also becoming more common, where space is limited.

Councilman Shell commented that something like a columbarium would cost money up front. Mr. Norton said that cost analysis will be brought to Council to consider what direction they want to go. Councilwoman Jenkins asked about differences between Oak Hill and East View and Mr. Norton said it would all be the same across the board. She also asked about work that needs to be done at East View. Mr. Norton said that SPLOST has identified that work at East View to be done.

Mr. Phillips said there was a \$2.5 million line item in SPLOST for cemetery improvements. This included improvements at both Oak Hill and East View and Council will need to decide the programming of what they want to get out of that \$2.5 million. This will be discussed at the upcoming Council retreat.

Mr. Norton explained that he would like to explore the possibility of putting out an RFP for a third-party vendor to do opening and closings and then city staff could focus on maintenance.

No action needed.

H. Consideration of Contract Award for Professional Design Services regarding Bicentennial Park and Improvements to Greenville St. Park

Motion by Councilman Shell, seconded by Councilman Thomasson to approve the contract award as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

I. Consideration of Contract Award for Construction Manager Services regarding Bicentennial Park and Improvements to Greenville St. Park

Councilwoman Jenkins asked where things are at with the designs of the Bicentennial Park? Mr. Phillips explained that the design team and the construction manager are being put together at the same time so they can work together. So, there is no design yet, just a concept plan. There will be many input opportunities.

Motion by Councilman Shell, seconded by Councilwoman Jenkins to approve the contract award as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

J. Council Direction on Charter Amendment and Code of Ordinances Amendment Pertaining to Adoption of Ordinances

Mr. Phillips said this is not for an ordinance consideration, it is to get direction from Council, either move forward or not. If council moves forward it will require a charter amendment and that will have to be advertised. The previous suggestions made either go to simple majority rule, second readings on certain types of ordinances or unanimous for the number of council members present. Staff found that most entities go with majority and there are a few that have a reading only of an ordinance at a prior meeting then majority when it comes to the vote. Staff recommend going with simple majority.

Councilman Koritko commented that there is wisdom in how this was setup originally, giving time to think things over. Councilman Shell asked if anything has ever changed with a second reading? No one could recall a time when things changed. Mayor Brady commented that no one knows why it was established like this to begin with and it is not common practice.

City Attorney commented that there used to be a strong Mayor form of government. Then in 1987 when the charter was redone, this was just carried through as what Council had always done. Councilman Guillaume suggested they go with majority vote to keep things simple. Council discussed virtual voting when not physically present.

Councilwoman Jenkins agreed that sometimes more time is needed to think things through. Also, people get busy and may miss things online and not see something on the agenda. There was a discussion about public hearings and that sometimes there is confusion as to when the public is allowed to speak, and people don't always know that they cannot speak at the second reading. Mayor Brady said that this is also an issue at the first meeting of the year when the budget needs to be approved. If a second reading is needed for the budget, that is not good for the city, to have to wait to have an approved budget.

Councilwoman Jenkins said she thinks they should put the item on the agenda first, prior to a vote then the next meeting is the vote. Councilman Thomasson clarified that staff recommendation is simple majority. Mr. Phillips stated that yes that is recommended but Councilwoman Jenkins suggestion is also used in other cities. Councilman Guillaume stated that as elected officials they are responsible to come to the meetings prepared for the agenda items. Council discussed the process and when things are time sensitive.

Motion by Councilman Guillaume, seconded by Councilman Shell to continue with the process for changing to simple majority vote for ordinance adoption. Opposed: Jenkins, Koritko

MOTION CARRIED. (5-2)

K. Consideration of Amendment to Resolution and Agreement to State the Intended Uses of Funds as a Result of National Opioid Settlements

Mr. Craver explained the process that has been ongoing since Council voted to join the National Opioid Settlement agreement. Funds were approved to be used by Coweta FORCE to fund a program in the emergency room for people struggling with recovery needs. Additional funds have now been received for other payers. There is a discussion about expanding the program to individual primary care physicians. Staff recommend engaging Coweta FORCE for an additional 5 years and to receive all funds that have come in and will continue to come in.

Councilman Koritko asked about the individual physicians. Dan Dixon with Coweta FORCE stated that the physicians are all within the Piedmont group.

Motion by Councilman Thomasson, seconded by Councilman Shell to adopt the resolution as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

VISITORS, PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS & COMPLAINTS

L. Request from NHS Band Boosters to Close Armory Rd on November 2, 2024 from 8am-12am midnight for Band Competition

Mayor Brady asked about the armory and any other activities that day at the school. Ms. Christy Hammond said she spoke with the National Guard unit, and they would not be there that day. She then spoke with the school and there is SAT testing that day, but they said there's plenty of space on Cougar Way and testing should be done by 11:30am. The bands start around 12:30pm. They do not see an issue with this.

Motion by Councilwoman Jenkins, seconded by Councilman Shell to approve the request as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

M. Request from First Baptist Church to Close Brown St. between W. Washington St. and Madison St. for Preschool Fall Festival on October 24, 2024 from 12pm-8pm

Motion by Councilman Koritko, seconded by Councilman Shell to approve the request as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Guillaume, 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 real estate 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 3:18 PM.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

RESOLUTION/MAYOR'S AFFIDAVIT FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Guillaume, 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. (7-0)

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilman Koritko, seconded by Councilman DuBose to adjourn the Council meeting at 3:31pm.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

Megan Shea, City Clerk

Keith Brady, Mayor