

City of Gordon  
Council Minutes  
October 6, 2014

The Council of the City of Gordon met in regular session on Monday, October 6, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. at the City Annex located at 108 Elam Street. Members present were Mayor Mary Ann Whipple-Lue and Council Members Mr. Terry Eady, Mr. Terry Reese, Mr. Tommy Smallwood, Mrs. Barbara Towles, and Mrs. Doretha Whipple. Councilman Densley was absent due to illness.

Mayor called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Mayor said we will now have our invocation by Pastor Odom. Due to absence of Pastor Odom, invocation was given by Mayor.

The Pledge of Allegiance was then recited.

Mayor welcomed everyone to the City Council Meeting and asked that everyone conduct themselves in a professional manner and if not, Council will have the pleasure this evening of adjusting what might need to be done.

Mayor then said our first order of business is to approve the Executive Session Minutes of August 4, 2014. A motion was by Councilman Eady to table the minutes. There are too many errors that I have found in them. They are not anywhere near correct, so we can't accept them as they are. We are going to have to find some way to get them corrected, but we can't accept them as they are. Mayor asked had everybody had a chance to read them. Mayor called for discussion. Council Member Whipple said when we had these minutes before we said we would have to go into executive session to amend those. So when we have our next executive session we can amend those. Mayor said, so we have a motion to table those. The motion was seconded by Councilman Smallwood. Mayor called for all in favor. There were 5 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

Mayor said next we will have the approval of the Executive Session Minutes of August 18, 2014. A motion was made by Councilman Eady to table these minutes, also. They have errors in them, too. Motion was seconded by Councilman Smallwood. Mayor said a motion has been made and seconded, all in favor. There were 5 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

Mayor said the next item is to approve Council Minutes of August 18, 2014. A motion was made by Councilman Eady to adopt the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Smallwood. Mayor called for all in favor. Voting for the motion were Councilman Eady, Councilman Smallwood, and Council Member Whipple. Voting against the motion were Council Member Towles and Councilman Reese. Attorney Boone addressed Councilman Eady by saying, technically, before you can approve the regular minutes you have to at least have an affidavit for the executive session to make the minutes approvable by the Council because they are both part of the same meeting. The Executive Session Minutes are part of the regular meeting minutes. Mayor said here is a copy of the Executive Session Minutes, but we have discussed already that we are going to table it. Councilman Eady said there is a difference in that than in the affidavit. The affidavit has to be filed at the time of the Executive Session, but we haven't approved it either. Mayor presented a copy of the affidavit and said we don't have Attorney Jones here to sign off on it, so....Councilman Eady said, who? I'm sorry, there is no Attorney Jones. Mayor said at that time, he was the city attorney. So, would you all, Council, like to

have a copy of the minutes. Mayor then said, excuse me, we will not have any interruptions from the audience. Please take a copy and pass these down please. Councilman Eady said these are the minutes I already have. Sorry, I was expecting an affidavit. Mayor said we had the affidavit here before. I just have one copy of the affidavit, so if ya'll want to look it over, just pass it down. It has not been signed off on. Mayor then asked Councilman Reese if he had a chance to look over it. Councilman Eady asked if he needed to amend the motion to include the affidavit? Attorney Boone replied by saying yes. Councilman Eady made a motion to amend to add the affidavit to accepting the minutes of August 18, 2014. Mayor stated a motion has been made. Do I have a second to amend the motion to add the affidavit to the minutes? Motion was seconded by Councilman Smallwood. Mayor called for all in favor. Councilman Eady stated that a roll call would probably be better. Mayor said they have not had a chance to review it. Councilman Eady asked for discussion on the minutes. Mayor once again asked Council Members if they have had a chance to review the affidavit. Mayor then called for discussion. Councilman Eady said we can't keep moving from month to month without approving our minutes. This is over a month behind now. Everybody has had the minutes in their hands for over a month now and everybody should have already been able to read them. If there are any items in them that need to be changed or whatever, that is what you need to do at this time. You can't just keep passing over the minutes without approving them. So, someone needs to either ask what corrections need to be made so that they can be corrected and move on. These minutes have got to be adopted. We are already over a month behind. Mayor said well, in this discussion, what has been made...table this as you said in the first beginning, that this is much confusion in these minutes and I personally need more information on my rights and the rights of the City. Hence, I need to get more details of the laws governing this matter. With respect to Attorney Richardson, I just need to be convinced that the actions in this is in the best interest of the City. So, do you all have any discussion? Other members? Councilman Eady then asked, "What does Attorney Richardson have to do with the minutes?" Mayor replied by saying just as I said, I need further information, that's me personally. Now you as a Council, you can address that. I made my statement. Councilman Eady said I certainly would like to hear from any other Councilperson who has anything they need to see or change in it, but we need to adopt these minutes so we can move on. Councilman Reese then said these minutes are 67 pages, which is a lot. I've been on Council nineteen, going on twenty years and I have never seen minutes like these. What we are getting now with our minutes, we are getting transcripts, something that a court reporter would do. Really, I think what we need to do with these minutes is to go back to what we were doing with the minutes. The minutes need to be summarized. Verbatim, word for word, everything that is on there is a little much. This is a lot of minutes and with everything that is going on with the City and court cases, I do suspect these minutes to come before the courts and somebody to say ya'll adopted these minutes for this day and on page 55 paragraph 2, it was stated blah, blah, blah. We have no way of remembering. If we could get these minutes summarized...67 pages is a bit much. I would like to see it done in a summary basis rather than a transcript. Mayor called for any further discussion. Councilman Eady said there is nothing in the law that says you can't do it this way. This is an acceptable means of writing up the minutes. Everything is exactly reflective of what is on the tape. There is nothing that can change. Mayor then said Council, we need to move forward. No further discussion. Councilman Eady said roll call vote, please. Mayor then said roll call vote. Roll call went as follows: Council Member Whipple – yes, Council Member Towles – no, Councilman Smallwood – no, Councilman Eady – yes, Councilman Reese – no. Motion failed.

Mayor said we now move forward to the minutes of September 15, 2014. A motion was made by Councilman Reese, seconded by Councilman Eady to approve the minutes of September 15, 2014. Mayor called for discussion. Hearing none, she said a motion has been made and seconded. All in favor roll call. Roll call went as follows: Council Member Whipple – yes, Council Member Towles – yes, Councilman Smallwood – yes, Councilman Eady – yes, Councilman Reese – yes. Motion carried.

Mayor then said next we want to talk about the approval of the Budget Workshop Minutes of September 18, 2014. Mayor called for a motion. A motion was made by Councilman Eady, seconded by Councilman Smallwood to accept the minutes as presented. Mayor said a motion has been made and seconded. Mayor then called for discussion. Council Member Whipple said I have something I would like to say about the budget work shop. I am very disappointed at the way some things have been happening at these Council Meetings. As I previously said, as a City Council, as City officials elected and non-elected, we are here for the betterment of the City of Gordon for all the citizens of Gordon. First of all, we are a new government. Now I'd like to talk about the budget. When the subject of the budget came up at the last Council Meeting, everyone was present except for Councilman Densley. The Clerk, lawyers, Mayor, and Council Members. We set a date for a budget workshop. I have a problem with City officials not sharing important critical information that concerns the citizens. All veteran Council Members, Clerk, and lawyers, should have reported to us, the Mayor and newly elect, that the City of Gordon is a member of the Regional Commission. That commission do budgets and they also do grants, they write grants. No one told us. We didn't have any knowledge about doing a budget for the City. We didn't have to go through this, because it could have been told to us. We were not informed about being a member of this organization. I want to thank the Wilkinson County Post for printing in the paper that the Mayor did not know how to do a budget. It was in the September 25<sup>th</sup> newspaper. I want to thank you all because if you had not of printed that in the paper, then a concerned citizen would not have called me and told me and gave me information, which I confirmed this by calling them and they confirmed that they do budgets and Gordon is a member of this. I'd just like to say to the Council, officials, and everybody here, let's just try to please, please, work together. Judge Reeves even told us to try to work together. We gonna have to work together. One of us not gonna fall, all of us is gonna fail. We don't want to fail our City. I just wanted to share that with everybody here and the Council Members. Mayor then called for any further discussion, additions, or such. So, what we will agree to do is accept the minutes. A motion has been made and seconded. Councilman Eady reminded Mayor to do a roll call vote. Mayor then said, roll call. Roll call went as follows: Council Member Towles – yes, Council Member Whipple – yes, Councilman Smallwood – yes, Councilman Eady – yes, Councilman Reese – yes. Motion carried.

Mayor said the next item up for discussion is old business. We have none.

Mayor then said under new business, we have Pat Roberts – depot rental complaint. Is she here? You know we have in our packet about the complaint that Ms. Roberts...Mr. Daniel, can you come up and give us further details about that and tell us what happened. Bruce Daniel started by saying I haven't seen her complaint, but I do know that I guess she complained because there is not enough tables over there. I do question her complaint if she did have the party. That's basically all I know about it. Council Member Whipple suggested tabling until Ms. Roberts can attend Council Meeting. A motion was made

by Council Member Whipple to table the motion until Ms. Roberts can attend Council Meeting. Councilman Reese asked is her complaint that she could not use the facility? Mayor said she used it. Councilman Reese said she did use it for the event she rented it for. Mayor said that's right. Councilman Reese said, if it was not up to par, she shouldn't have used to facility. Then, it wouldn't be a problem reimbursing her that which she is seeking. But, to use the facility and come back and complain, it just don't add up. So, I say we make a motion that we just throw this complaint out, if she used the facility. Mayor said she used the facility. Councilman Reese then said I offer a motion that we throw the complaint out then and just let it go because she used it and move on. Motion was seconded by Councilman Eady. Mayor called for any further discussion. A motion has been made and seconded, all in favor, roll call. Roll call went as follows: Council Member Whipple – yes, Council Member Towles - yes, Councilman Smallwood – yes, Councilman Eady – yes, Councilman Reese – yes. Motion carried.

Mayor then said the next item for discussion is Ms. Valeria Shinholster – request for reimbursement for sewage fees. Is she here? Ms. Shinholster said yes, I am. Mayor then said come forward Ms. Shinholster. Ms. Shinholster said I have lived at 214 Elam Street for thirteen years. I've been paying sewage for those thirteen years. I told previous government that I was not getting sewage. But, I was told that because I was in the vicinity I would have to pay for sewage. But, it has been investigated and the sewage line turns before it gets to my house so I'm not connected to the sewage and I'm not in the vicinity of getting the sewage. (Copy of Ms. Shinholster's letter to Mayor & Council attached.) Mayor said, but you have paid in the past for sewage. Ms. Shinholster replied yes. Councilman Reese said you've been paying for thirteen years Ms. Shinholster. Ms. Shinholster again replied yes. Mayor said to Ms. Shinholster, you've said that you've come before to this Council. Ms. Shinholster said I've reported it to the City when I paid the water bill. I was like I don't get sewage, I'm on a septic tank. But I was told by a previous government that because I was in the vicinity because the sewage was on Elam Street, that's all they looked at. They did not look to see that it turns before it gets to my house. Mayor said so you paid for thirteen years not being connected to sewage. Ms. Shinholster said correct. Councilman Eady said you are saying Elam Street, this street right here. Ms. Shinholster said right. Councilman Eady asked her how far up is it. Ms. Shinholster said I live two houses down from Councilman Reese's brother. Councilman Reese asked, does the sewage run by your house? Ms. Shinholster said no it turns before my house. Councilman Reese asked is there any way you can connect up? She again replied, no, it turns before it gets to my house. Mayor asked are you on a hill? Councilman Eady asked if Mr. Lawrence was here tonight. Mayor then said Mr. Lawrence, are you present? Mayor asked for Mr. Lawrence to come in. Councilman Eady said Melvin, we are talking about her sewage on 214 Elam Street. She says she can't hook up to it. Do you know any more about it? That's kind of a broad statement. Supt. Lawrence said when she filed the complaint, I went and checked to make sure that the sewage didn't run in front of her house or that it did. It does not run in front of her house. Mayor said so for thirteen years she has not been connected, ever. Supt. Lawrence replied, no. Councilman asked if there was a possibility. Supt. Lawrence replied, no sir, because where the manhole is in front of Jerry Reese's house or in between Jerry Reese and Charles Austin. In order for Charles to hook in he had to run across toward Jerry Reese's house. They live on the other side of Charles Austin. So, there is no way. Council Member Whipple said so there's no way she could ever get sewage. Supt. Lawrence replied no ma'am. Mayor said, well Council we have all heard. Councilman Reese said so you live inside the City

Limits, right? Ms. Shinholster replied, I do. Councilman Reese said I thought when we got this last improvement grant that we were gonna tie everybody in, especially those in the city limits and make a way for them to have access, but we didn't do that because I wasn't on either and I didn't get on until they just did this system not long ago. Councilman Reese asked Ms. Shinholster what she wanted this Council to do. Ms. Shinholster said I want to be reimbursed for the thirteen years that I've paid for a service that I don't receive. Councilman Eady said you haven't complained until now. Ms. Shinholster said I complained before but I was told because I was in the vicinity and nobody came out and looked like Melvin did. Nobody came and looked to make sure. They just said because I'm on Elam Street and they know the sewage runs on Elam Street that I would have to pay because I was in the vicinity. So, I went with that because that was what I was told. Councilman Eady said that is the policy now. There are some technicalities that you are bringing up that Melvin answered for us. But, that is typically right. If you are in the vicinity, you should be hooked up to it, then you are required to pay even if you don't hook up to it, you are required to pay it. That is probably the reason you've paid for it all this time. Nobody has really looked any closer than what Melvin just did. Councilman Eady said don't they make sewage pumps where you can just put in a septic tank and access sewage lines. I've heard of them and seen them in some of these places that we go to look at the equipment that they have. Supt. Lawrence said yes sir. Councilman Eady said for low lying areas, little pumps just like out at the little place just outside the City Limits up Massey Hill. They have a pumping station that they pump over to ours. Supt. Lawrence said they do make those pumps, but as far as where she's at, you would have to cross two more people's property to get to it. Councilman Eady asked if she had street access in front of her. Supt. Lawrence said yes. Councilman Eady said if she has street access, then we have access, the City does have right-of-way. Supt. Lawrence said right, you can come straight down to the street and then go over to the manhole. That is possible. Councilman Eady made a motion to table this until we can get some more information and bring it back up at a later time. Its been thirteen years so there is no big hurry now. We need to get some legal advice on the consequences. Councilman Reese said I want to add to it now that if we gone wait on legal advice, we need to stop charging her for sewage in the meantime. City Clerk Towana Brown stated that when Melvin verified it, Heather took the sewage charges off the computer. Mayor called for any further discussion. Councilman Reese asked Ms. Shinholster if it was alright with her if we research it a little further and get back with her. Ms. Shinholster replied yes. Mayor said thank you so much. Councilman Reese seconded the motion. Mayor said a motion has been made and seconded. All in favor, let's hear by roll call. Roll call went as follows: Council Member Whipple – yes, Council Member Towles – yes, Councilman Smallwood – yes, Councilman Eady – yes, Councilman Reese – yes. Motion carried.

Mayor said our next item is first reading of Ordinance pertaining to GMEBS Life & Health Program. Mayor presented the first reading of AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR PARTICIPATION BY THE CITY OF GORDON, GEORGIA IN THE GEORGIA MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES BENEFIT SYSTEM LIFE AND HEALTH PROGRAM. A motion was made by Councilman Eady, seconded by Councilman Reese to accept the first reading of the Ordinance as presented. Roll call went as follows: Council Member Whipple – yes, Council Member Towles – yes, Councilman Smallwood – yes, Councilman Eady – yes, Councilman Reese – yes. Motion carried. City Clerk said the second reading and adoption of the Ordinance will be at the next meeting.

Mayor then said the next item for discussion is Leigh Richey and Candace Amos with Local Government Risk Management Services, Inc. They passed out to City Council handouts entitled "Promoting health and wellness in the workplace" and "Personal Health Analysis". Each was also given a stress doll. (Copies of handouts attached.) Ms. Leigh Richey thanked Council for having them here today. For being a part of the life and health insurance program through the Georgia Municipal Association, you are eligible for local government risk management services. What we do we offer through that program are free wellness programs. Its programs you can offer to get the employees more healthy and well and hopefully the end result of that will cause the health insurance cost to come down. We understand that it is a big cost to insure your employees. We do offer a lot of programs. You can read about them on the handout with the green border. We also offer employee training programs. So, Candace and I were just going to run a couple of those by you today so you are aware of a couple of examples. One of those are the health risk assessments that are available. Basically, its just a lifestyle questionnaire that employees can complete. Based on their answers they will get a personalized individual report sent to whatever address they would like. Most people send that home. Just detailing based on the answers in areas of their health that look good and areas that may need to be improved upon and it will give them tips and tricks on how to improve in those not so good areas. It is confidential and a group report will come back indicating areas that employees can improve upon. On the back page are for clinical measurements. GMA actually puts out annual bonus grants that you can apply for. Its free money to start, grow, or maintain a wellness program. A lot of groups actually use that money to provide clinical measurements. The City has done the health programs in the past. Candace has worked with Mayor Turner on different programs offering different things. Another one is the Stress Management Program and that's what that little guy is about!

Candace Amos then addressed the Council and said one of the classes we do offer is Stress Management. We go over different techniques and different ways to cope and deal with stress. As humans in general, we can get stressed out and that can be from every day responsibilities. So, one of the techniques we discuss at the class is about deep breathing. When we get stressed out sometimes, it is best to just stop, take a moment and think about what is going on and then respond appropriately. So, I want to go over one of the deep breathing techniques we use to help us do that. If you don't mind, take your left hand, place it over your chest, and your right hand over your stomach. Alright, just breathe for me. Now tell me which one did you feel rising first, your chest or your abdomen? When you are deep breathing, your abdomen will rise first. So, whenever you get stressed out, its always a good idea to just take a deep breath, relax, and stop and respond appropriately. Also, once you get through with your deep breathing, you can always listen to Mr. Troll here, if you squeeze him, listen to what he says. So, this is another way to help deal with stress. Stress is a huge problem for everyone all over the state and the United States. Stress can lead to so many health problems such as high blood pressure and heart disease. So, just keeping ourself stress free is one of the best things we can do, not just at work, but in general all over everyday.

Leigh Richey said my closing remark was that I was going to hula hoop for you but I feel I might snap somebody in the face if I tried! We also do physical activities programs giving people tips and tricks. The hula hoop is weighted and it's great for melting the visceral fat that hangs out around our bellies. It's

part of the physical activities program. We point people in the right direction and cheap things they can buy at Wal-Mart so they can do physical activity in the house. We appreciate you having us down. If you need any further information...

Councilman Eady asked what's the deadline?

Ms. Richey explained that the deadline has passed for this grant year. But, the applications usually come out around springtime and are due by the middle of summer and then the grant checks are awarded at the beginning of October. So it is something to keep in mind. Our services are completely free of charge. It's a perk for being on the life and health insurance program through GMA. We are here for you!

Mayor thanked Ms. Amos and Ms. Richey for the stress dolls.

Mayor said our next order of business is that I would like to say that we are moving on to our police report.

Council Member Towles said I don't have anything unless Chief Hall has something. Is he here? Chief Hall was not present.

Fire Chief Terry Eady reported that everything going along good. We have had one or two fires and I would like to remind everyone that when cold weather starts coming in like it has now, that's the worst time of year for us to start experiencing fires when people start firing up their fireplaces and furnaces. We had one just yesterday when someone started the furnace up, a squirrel or something had built a nest in it and it caught fire right away. So just a word of advice, please check your furnaces and fireplaces out and be prepared for the cold weather that is coming up real soon.

Council Member Whipple reported for the street department. She said we are working to beautify the City. At the last Council Meeting, we had a few complaints. Since then Melvin and myself talked and the guys are really doing a great job improving the City.

Mayor said thank you so much. I can even see the results and you are to be commended. We want to continue to make Gordon be the best that we can be.

Mayor then called for water and sewage. We know that Councilman Smallwood stated in the last meeting to me that he would like to be not reassigned to this, so we will have to discuss that and ask others or assign to continue with the water and sanitation because that is very important.

Mayor said next we have finance, Councilman Reese.

Councilman Reese said in our main area of finance, am I safe to say that based on what Council Member Whipple said earlier, that it is our goal to pursue DCA regarding doing the budget for us? Mayor replied,

yes. She contacted me, but I have not had a chance to return her call. Councilman Reese said, other than that, that's it as for as finance goes.

Councilman Reese had nothing to report as liaison.

Mayor said I notice that we have in our presence Senator David Lucas. Would you like to have any words Senator Lucas? Senator Lucas said that he was just here to listen. Mayor said, thank you, Senator Lucas.

Mayor then asked if Mr. Johnson from BASF was present. Mr. Johnson was not present.

Mayor said we have no citizens to be heard.

Councilman Eady said just for information, the RC (Regional Commission), they can put the program together for the website. They sent a proposal in and I've got a copy of it and I will give it to the Clerk and she can make a copy for everybody to look at. They usually charge around \$6000, but they are going to waive that fee and all they will charge is \$1260.00 for maintenance to keep it up all year. I just wanted everybody to know that they can do that. We are already on the website with Wilkinson County, but are not active. They can build us an active one and then our City Clerk and assistant will have a password and they can go in and put the agenda, the minutes, the City Charter, or anything you want on there, and people can go to that site and print it off on their home computer, the library, etc.

Mayor said right, and we would also like to incorporate that and mention to them that the budget and all this information about the City of Gordon. We don't want to leave anything out. Also, I was told that you could access it, but I know that we are not on Municode so that is something we want to tap into also.

Mayor then called on Mr. Bruce Daniel to give a report. Mayor said we have been hearing a lot so he is going to put at bay some of the myths.

Mr. Daniel said that on September 26, 2014, we did the Tour de Gordon with the Wilkinson County Pre-K students. We had around 120 students in town. He thanked the Post Office, Morris Bank, and Gordon Police Department for welcoming these children. They came to the Depot and we had characters there and the parents and teachers also came with them. It was a wonderful day for Gordon that day with all the Pre-k students coming to town. We are working on Halloween. The Ghost & Goblin Trail will be on October 31, Halloween, from 6 – 8 p.m. downtown. Mayor asked Mr. Daniel for a flyer. Mr. Daniel then distributed flyers to Council of Halloween events. (Copy of flyer attached.) Mayor said she did enjoy the visit with the children the day they were at the Depot, as your Mayor, I had a great time. Mr. Daniel agreed that it turned out very well. We want to thank all of our volunteers for coming out and helping. We cleaned up the Depot the day before. It was well organized and run very well. We plan on doing our Ghost Tours for three nights, October 30 & 31, and November 1. For the Trick or Treat Downtown, we are looking for 3000-4000 kids to come downtown that day. We talked to the



Police Department about that so we are good with that. We are working now to get our merchants lined up and our candy passed out to the merchants for the children for a safe Halloween. I thank ya'll.

Mayor said, no further business, Council will entertain a motion to adjourn.

A motion was made by Councilman Eady, seconded by Council Member Whipple to adjourn at 8:24 p.m. Mayor called for all in favor. Voting for the motion were 5 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

Oct. 20, 2014  
Approved & Adopted

Mary Whipple-Lue  
Mayor

Jacana Ben  
City Clerk