

City of Gordon
Council Minutes
Called Meeting

The Council of the City of ^{Gordon} held a called meeting on Monday, September 14, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. at the City Annex located at 108 Elam Street. Members present were Mayor Mary Ann Whipple-Lue and Council Members Mr. Freddie Densley, Mr. Terry Eady, Mr. Tommy Smallwood, Mrs. Barbara Towles, Mrs. Doretha Whipple, and Mr. George Wynn.

Mayor said good evening. We are here for the called meeting. The meeting is now called to order. Let us bow our heads for a moment of prayer.

Invocation was given by Mayor.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mayor said I just like to say it's another day and I'd like to thank you and everyone of you for being out and exercising your view civically for a meeting. We now have Ms. Vanessa Fountain. Will you come down please?

Ms. Vanessa Fountain, Wilkinson County Tax Commissioner, said I am just here to help the City of Gordon set their millage rate. Ya'll have two options at this point. I talked to the Mayor and also Mr. Terry Eady about where you can stay at which is 4.495. If ya'll stay at that, you're gonna lose \$12,583.00, what ya'll made last year, okay. Ya'll can increase without having three public hearings, less than three percent, which would be 4.645. If you do that millage rate, you would only lose \$4635.00. I think it's your best bet. And as far as the taxpayers of Gordon, I personally am a taxpayer, it's only six cents difference on every hundred dollars, hundred percent value. It's not that big of an increase for the City of Gordon. But, we need to decide this tonight, one way or the other, what you want to run in the paper. If you run it in the paper on the 17th and the 24th, then you can vote to adopt one on October 5th.

Mayor said you've pretty much explained in your letter that was self explanatory, due to the hour of the information and such, so thank you so much for coming. So Council...

Mr. Konreid Etheredge said to Mayor, "I have a question. Could I ask her?"

Mayor replied, "No. We're not open for discussion as of yet. I've got to ask if Council... We're not taking questions from the audience right now. It's mainly with the Council."

Mayor said, so, Council, this is open for discussion. Have you all had a chance to look over the current tax digest and the five year history because I spoke with you and you said the last time we had an increase was when, Vanessa?

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Ms. Fountain replied, "The last time ya'll had an increase was in 2011."

Mayor said, "2011."

Ms. Fountain said, "It was a small increase then. It went from 4.473 to 4.495."

Councilman Eady said I would like to make a motion that we accept the tax rate with the 2.99 percent increase. Councilman Wynn said I second it. At the same time, Councilman Smallwood also said I second it.

Council Member Towles said discussion. I think with the City got the type of monies that they have right now, I don't think we need to do a increase on the taxes right now. You know, we are in good standards as far as money is what the Auditor said. So, I don't think we should do an increase now."

Councilman Eady asked, "May I, Mayor? Last year we only took in \$205,000.00 in property taxes last year, not counting \$8000.00 that came in that was due from the year before. We were looking for \$231,000.00, but we did not get that. We only got \$205,965.68. We've been going backwards every year for the last five or six years. We just turned around and hired two new employees that we got to put on our payroll that's going to cost us approximately seventy to eighty thousand dollars in salary, insurance, and all the benefits you've got to pay to them. This year alone, we've already taken out \$400,000 out of the reserve fund - One Georgia Fund. Last September, before this year started, we took \$135,000.00 from the CD to reinforce our money so that we would have enough to make the payroll last year. I do not see any way that we can keep going taking \$400,000 to \$500,000 out of that money. Now is the time to make a start and I stick with asking that we go up on it, you know, 2.99 percent."

Mayor said to Councilman Eady, "Let me ask you this Councilman. You were talking about... When was this \$430,000 taken out?"

Councilman Eady replied, "We took \$400,000 out since January. Out of the One Georgia Fund, we took the \$150,000, then we took \$250,000."

Mayor said, "Okay."

Councilman Eady said, "That's \$400,000."

Mayor asked, "Of this year?"

Councilman Eady replied, "Yes ma'am. Then last September, just before this year started, we moved the CD into the One Georgia Fund, that interest money that had been made on that CD amounted to \$135,000.00. We did not transfer that into the CD. We just moved two million into it. So, we took that \$135,000.00, so in one year we've added \$535,000.00 extra to the budget that's not in the budget. Those monies were not budgeted out of the reserve fund. We've got to make amendments, this month, to reflect that. We can't keep going that route. We have got to start going up on our monies that we're taking in. We can't keep going that way."

Mayor said to Councilman Eady, "I clearly hear what you are saying and all, you know, about the CD's and such. I believe you were talking about...What about those CD's and all that we have over at the other bank? Do you know anything about that?"

Councilman Eady and City Clerk both replied, "We don't have any."

Councilman Eady replied, "We don't have anymore CD's."

Mayor asked, "There are no more CD's at the Magnolia Bank? When were they moved?"

City Clerk replied to Mayor, "You know I've explained to you several times that the CD's were transferred back to Morris Bank."

Mayor said, "Un huh. When was this done? I'm asking..."

City Clerk replied, "I've told you this several times. I can't give you exact dates, but now it's back in your Georgia Fund 1."

Mayor asked, "All of the CD's?"

City Clerk replied, "Yes ma'am. We only had one."

Mayor asked, "There was only one?"

City Clerk replied, "Uh huh."

Mayor asked, "How much was that for?"

City Clerk replied, "I can't remember the exact amount. We just talked about it a few Council Meetings ago."

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Mayor asked, "Is that right? I don't recall and you may have. I'm just saying, I'm just trying to find out because, some of us...."

City Clerk said, "We've talked about it several times in this Council Room."

Mayor asked, "Do ya'll know anything about it Council?"

Council Member Whipple, "I was going to ask, since all of this went on and this money was taken out, why wasn't the whole Council aware... Why wasn't the Council aware of all of this?"

City Clerk replied, "They were. We did a resolution on them."

Council Member Whipple said, "Because I was reading on...I was reading in the minutes that I just got the other day, where I think some money was moved in February and I can't remember that being brought to the City Council."

City Clerk said, "We did the resolutions."

Councilman Eady asked Council Member Whipple, "Which money were you talking about now?"

Council Member Whipple said, "Some more money that was taken out of the Georgia 1 Fund."

Mayor said, "Right, out of the Georgia 1 Fund."

Council Member Whipple said, "I saw where the Auditor even questioned that. He said it wasn't..."

Councilman Eady said, "We moved \$150,000."

Council Member Whipple asked Councilman Eady, "Have you read your Council Minutes for the last meeting?"

Councilman Eady replied, "Yes ma'am. I've read all the minutes. There's..."

Council Member Whipple interrupted Councilman Eady and asked, "I'm talking about...Did you read the one that came in, that we just got? Have you had a chance to read it?"

Councilman Eady replied, "I have read it. Yes ma'am."

Council Member Whipple said, "Okay because..."

Mayor said, "I'd like to say to that, because early on and I hear what you're saying about the 150, I think that was earlier this year when I moved the \$150,000, I'm sure you all remember that."

Council Member Whipple said, "I remember that."

Mayor said, "It was not so much that I moved it, but I moved it based on the fact, not that it was something I wanted to do, but it had been proposed to me, Mayor, we don't have enough money to meet what? Payroll. And so that was my only reason for..."

Council Member Whipple said, "I remember that one and I remember the \$250,000.00 that was moved."

Several members of the audience said that's \$400,000.

Mayor said, "We need to ask the audience to keep quiet please. This is discussion between Council."

Council Member Whipple said, "It was when that was moved. It might be more than \$400,000.00 because it was one that was moved in February. I remember reading that. Some money was moved."

Mayor said, "Okay. So, what's your take...We start with Council...I'm gone start down there..."

Council Member Whipple asked Mayor, "We voting now to...?"

Mayor said, "We discussing."

Council Member Whipple said, "We discussing now, we need to get the vote."

Mayor asked, "Is there any further discussion about this?"

Council Member Whipple said, "I don't see how we spent no money because the streets got all these potholes and everything in streets and we hadn't did anything for the citizens and we got

money in reserve. Then why make the citizens pay and go up on there taxes?"

Councilman Wynn said, "You've got daily expenses every day."

Council Member Whipple said, "But, you've got to give the citizens something to get something."

Mayor said, "And I hear what you're saying Councilman Wynn. Yes, we've got daily expenses, we keep daily expenses. But, looking at some of these expenses and going back and looking at overall, it's like we just keep repeating the same thing over and over. Now I tell you if you keep doing things the same way, guess what you get? The same result. And like she said, these people want...They're here. They want to know where is this money going? Now, yes we are paying bills, but all of these unnecessaries...all of this trash still on the streets and I mean if you all just ride around and look. Now, we want to hear from the audience. I don't have a problem with opening up, but, if you're going to do that, let's all do it in a dignified manner. It's not here that anybody is throwing off on anyone. But, you ought to be able to give an account of every dollar that's spent. And if you're going to spend money, we've got to be mindful that some people work very hard for their money and it don't come easy. It comes easy for some people, but it don't come easy for some. So, I mean, you know... Any further discussion, you want to say about that, Council?"

Council Member Whipple said, "I think we just need to go on and take a vote because like I said, we need to give the citizens something because the streets is looking... The City is not looking...is not looking good. We need to give them something."

Councilman Wynn said, "I seen the Police Department out today and I seen guys picking up limbs on the streets, you know. What is that? I seen guys fixing water leaks today."

Council Member Whipple asked, "So, what are you doing with.. I mean I seen a lot of potholes, too."

Councilman Wynn said, "Well, the potholes are going to happen when you have a water leak."

Council Member Whipple said, "All over the City?"

Councilman Wynn replied, "Yeah. There's been a lot of water leaks lately. I mean, potholes are just gone happen."

Council Member Whipple asked, "All over the City?"

Councilman Wynn replied, "Anywhere."

Mayor said, "Councilman Densley, I'd like to hear from you."

Councilman Densley said, "Like Councilman Eady said a while ago, we just hired two new employees and they've got to be paid. Taking money out ain't helping none."

Mayor asked, "Do what?"

Councilman Densley replied, "We keep taking money out and putting none in, sooner or later, the cookie jar gone go dry. Then we're going to have to raise them three or four mils to catch it back up. We're already getting behind."

Mayor asked, "What are we behind on?"

Council Member Whipple said, "We got money in the reserve."

Mayor said, "We got money in the reserve."

Councilman Densley said, "We keep nibbling off of it, after while, they ain't gone be none."

Mayor said to Councilman Densley, "So, you're saying to raise taxes is going to fix that problem? We're not doing anything with what we've already got."

Councilman Densley said, "We just hired two employees. The reason they got behind is because they didn't have anybody to do the work."

Mayor said, "Well, this was before I...you know, before this administration."

Council Member Whipple said, "The getting behind thing is that you ain't hired nobody in three or four years. In three years, so you ain't just now getting behind."

Mayor asked, "How long have ya'll been behind, Councilman Densley?"

Councilman Densley replied, "However long we been pulling money out and not putting none in."

Mayor said, "I'm saying, how long you keep saying...So what ya'll been doing for money?"

Councilman Densley said, "Anytime you keep pulling money out and ain't putting none in, you gone get behind."

Mayor said, "Right, but I'm just saying, what have you been doing before?"

Council Member Whipple said, "But, you get money in. Every year you get money in."

Mayor said, "You get the same amount of money, but what we been doing with it is what they want to know and I'm sure...Go ahead."

Councilman Wynn said, "You're not getting enough."

Councilman Densley said, "I think Councilman Eady said...Well, Ms. Vanessa said we didn't get as much money in last year that we was expecting."

Council Member Whipple said, "Let's take a vote."

Mayor said, "I've heard what you've had to say Councilman about that. Thank you so much Councilman Densley. I've heard Councilman Eady. Councilman Smallwood, what's your take dear?"

Councilman Smallwood said, "Just like Terry. We need to quit taking so much out and put some in. I agree with him on the 2.99."

Mayor said, "Alright, so now, so, there be no further discussion, ya'll are done with the discussion, right, Council? Everybody in agreement, no further discussion. We'll so move to say that all in favor for the millage to remain the same or to increase, let it be known by..."

Councilman Eady said, "You've got to do one or the other, okay. You can't do it both ways."

Mayor laughed and said, "If you are all in favor for it remaining the same, then let's take a vote."

Councilman Eady voted no.

Councilman Wynn voted no.

Councilman Densley voted no.

Councilman Smallwood voted no.

Council Member Whipple voted aye.

Council Member Towles voted to let it remain the same.

Councilman Eady said to Mayor, "You did it right backward. The motion was on the table to accept the raise first. I mean, I'm just..."

Mayor asked, "Is that what it was?"

Councilman Eady said, "Yes ma'am. I made the motion and Mr. Smallwood seconded the motion, so that should have been..."

Mayor interrupted Councilman Eady and said, "But we had discussion. Okay."

Councilman Eady said, "Yes ma'am. That should have been the motion that we voted on first."

Mayor said, "Okay."

Councilman Eady said, "So, it hasn't been voted down, so, the next one is with the raise and I vote yes."

Councilman Densley voted yes.

Councilman Wynn voted yes.

Councilman Smallwood voted yes.

Mayor said, "The yes have it. So, with that being all..."

Council Member Whipple said, "I just say we need to give the citizens something for their tax dollars."

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Mayor said, 'We need to go ahead and...Now let it be known that this is what it is. It's been voted to increase and as Councilwoman Whipple said, "Give the people something for their tax dollars." I don't have any problem with what you all have said, so, with that being all, I have nothing further to discuss.'

Councilman Eady said, "I make a motion we adjourn."

Councilman Wynn and Councilman Smallwood both said, "Second."

Mayor said, "All in favor."

Voting for the motion were six ayes.

Mayor asked, "Any opposed? Good day. Meeting adjourned."

Meeting was adjourned at 5:46 p.m.

September 21, 2015
Approved & Adopted

Dary Whipple-Lue
Mayor

Trona Bean
City Clerk