

Council Minutes
City of Gordon
November 5, 2018

The Council of the City of Gordon held a meeting on Monday, November 5, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. at the City Hall located at 115 College Street. Members present were Mayor Kenneth Turner and Council Members Terry Eady, Rose Lawrence, Phyllis Payne, and George Wynn. Councilman Densley was not present when meeting was called to order but did join at a later time as indicated in these minutes. Councilman Daniel was absent.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Turner.

Mayor welcomed all present and asked if anyone present would like to be added to the agenda. Hearing no response, the agenda remained as posted.

A motion was made by Councilman Wynn and seconded by Council Member Lawrence to adopt the October 1, 2018 Public Hearing Minutes and the October 1, 2018 Council Meeting Minutes as presented. Voting for the motion were 4 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

The proposal to annex the Zschimmer and Schwarz property into the city of Gordon was discussed. The property is located within the county and the City of Gordon is providing them with water and sewage. Zschimmer and Schwarz has not started production at this time. (Councilman Densley joined meeting at this time.) However, they have been using water for some time and a few months ago did request the use of the sewage lines for the bathroom at their office. Mayor stated that if Zschimmer & Schwarz continues to grow as proposed, a unit will start up in a few months and the construction of a second unit will begin at the same time with a third unit expected in a few years. If construction goes as planned, the city will be maxed out with the ability to provide water and sewage to the plant when the second and third units are added. An additional water tank and well will be needed at a cost in the range of 1 - 1.5 million dollars. Some of the Council feels that if the plant will be using that amount of water, then Zschimmer & Schwarz needs to pay property taxes to help pay for these costs to help the city provide the services since additional investment money will be needed. Mayor recommended proceeding with the annexation of Zschimmer & Schwarz into the City of Gordon.

Attorney Green explained the different methods and benefits of annexation with the easiest being the 100% method in which the company requests or agrees to be annexed. Attorney Green reported that Zschimmer & Schwarz has no interest in being annexed into the City of Gordon at this time because they have heard that the City of Ivey may also be interested in annexing them into their city and they do not want to be in a political battle between the City of Gordon and the City of Ivey.

The Wilkinson County Development Authority currently owns the property the Zschimmer & Schwarz plant is located on.

Mayor again welcomed the Zschimmer & Schwarz Plant into our community and said police and fire protection would probably be offered too, but from a financial standpoint the City of Gordon feels that Zschimmer & Schwarz should be willing to pay property taxes and be an investment for part of the water and sewage services the city is providing to them.

Mayor suggested that the city formally ask Zschimmer & Schwarz to be annexed into the City of Gordon via the 100% annexation method to include both parcels of land.

Attorney Green recommended severing the part of the property that is inside the city limits of Ivey.

Jonathan Jackson said it is a correct assessment that Zschimmer & Schwarz does not wish to pursue annexation at this time. He also stated that the Wilkinson County Development Authority is the lease holder on the property so the request to annex would have to come to the Wilkinson County Development Authority and they would defer to the company's request on that.

Councilman Eady stated that he is aware that the City of Ivey is wanting to annex the Zschimmer & Schwarz property also and feels that the City of Gordon needs to make the move to annex immediately in hopes of being first to pursue the annexation and hopefully get first choice on the annexation of the property.

Mayor stated that he welcomes the Zschimmer & Schwarz Industry and wants to be partners with them. He then praised the efforts of the Wilkinson County Development Authority for their efforts in acquiring the industry for this area, but stressed that the city wants to be in a position to furnish them water and sewage as well and feels that from a financial standpoint the annexation has to happen. He stated that the City of Gordon is furnishing the services to Zschimmer & Schwarz that they need and that the City of Ivey has nothing to offer them, thus the City of Gordon should proceed with the annexation.

Jonathan Jackson voiced his concern that he does not want us to conflate two different issues and he realizes the terms of recovering investment dollars for the water and sewage expansion that is going to be needed. He thinks it would be a grave error to conflate water and sewage services with annexation at this point. He explained the reasoning behind this.

Council Member Lawrence stated she agrees with presenting a formal letter to Zschimmer & Schwarz asking them to be annexed into the City of Gordon so that we will know where they stand and we will then know how to proceed from there.

Councilman Eady stressed that if grants can be received to help install another water tank and well and the city does not have to absorb the cost, the annexation may not be needed, but the city

does want first choice at the annexation just to be safe.

Mayor Turner explained that different grants/loans are being explored for water and sewage and stated that the burden of providing services for this project will not be put on the citizens of Gordon.

Councilman Densley stated he agrees with pursuing the annexation at this time.

A motion was made by Councilman Eady and seconded by Councilman Densley to proceed with 100% annexation of the Zschimmer & Schwarz properties located in the county into the City of Gordon. Voting for the motion were 5 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

Mayor gave background update that the city of Gordon has agreed to take the effluent from the Zschimmer & Schwarz plant into our sewage treatment plant. He explained that our sewage treatment plant is not a conventional sewage plant, but a sewage plant that is based on live plants. He expressed his concern that the components that could be pumped into our sewage treatment plant from Zschimmer & Schwarz could effect the live plants. Zschimmer & Schwarz has installed a 3 million dollar pre-treatment plant to treat the effluent before it comes to the Gordon Sewage Treatment Plant. If the water is potable (drinkable) then the city will have no worries, but if anything is found different than that and until we know what it is, we can't determine if we can accept the effluent into our plant. If other components are found, we will have to take it to the University of Georgia for them to determine if it can be accepted into our plant without causing harm to the live plants, which could take several months.

Jonathan Jackson said he has gotten a listing from Tim Ingram on what the Gordon system can manage. He has met with chemists from the plant to determine what the sewage would look like after going through the pre-treatment plant. Everything meets the thresholds presented except for chemical oxygen demand in the water which means it needs a little more air in it. Ways of meeting this threshold are being determined. Mr. Jackson has requested from the chemists samples of the pre-treated sewage before it goes into the Milledgeville system in order to have some idea of what will be going into the sewage system in Gordon. Mr. Jackson went on to explain how the pre-treatment system works and the different ways of treating the sewage and ways of preventing the sewage spills from reaching the dirt. There are a few people working at the Gordon Zschimmer & Schwarz office at this time. The City of Gordon agreed for them to turn on the toilets in the bathrooms in the office complex. The plant is in no way connected to the sewage system yet and everyone is aware that they can't hook up to the sewage until the thresholds are met. Mr. Jackson voiced his concern that he got a call last week from Tim Ingram saying he had been asked to cut the sewage off from the Zschimmer & Schwarz office. Mr. Jackson expressed his concern that it does not make much sense to him to do so and it conveys the attitude that we are not wanting to work together and it seems like a pretty drastic

matter to take when its things that might could be addressed with a phone call.

Mr. Jackson also expressed his concern over the time that has been indicated that may be required for testing. He stated he got a memo dated October 26 saying that once he got a sample to test it may take up to two months for the testing to be completed. He stated he would like for that number to be based on a number from the actual testing agency rather than just pulling an arbitrary number to report to the company.

Mayor Turner commented that we have not agreed to any parameters that can come to this plant. He explained that what Tim Ingram gave him are the parameters that are currently established for the residential sewage that goes into our plant and it has nothing to do with the parameters Zschimmer & Schwarz will have to do. Depending on the components and ingredients found in the sewage from the Zschimmer & Schwarz Plant, a whole new list of parameters may have to be established. Until we know these answers, we can not tell you how long its going to take.

Frank Wall asked why do you want the office cut off.

Mayor Turner stated we haven't agreed that the sewage can come to Gordon yet. Until we reach that point, theorhetically, the line is already closed. We did that as a courtesy for the local bathroom to be used. We've not reached an agreement to open the sewage line.

Frank Wall expressed his concern over courtesy and the way things are and the efforts that have been made to buy property around here to make something happen for the City of Gordon and he went on to say this kind of foolishness is going to run people off and we're not going to get anything. He then stated that if he wants them to stop selling stuff around Gordon he can stop it tomorrow.

Mayor said you can stop it if you want to, that's up to you, but we can't risk killing the plants.

Frank Wall said nobody has said anything about killing a plant and that he doesn't believe the City of Gordon plant is big enough to handle the sewage that they say they can and that they may have to expand it.

Mayor said no we can't handle double or triple the amount and we never said we could. This issue was discussed.

Mayor stressed that we can not and will not allow effluent to come to this plant that might kill these plants and shut this plant down. The agreement was that we would take the effluent from the Zschimmer & Schwarz Plant when it was ready and approved and that has not happened yet so theorhetically we should not have opened for the bathrooms.

Frank Wall said if you want to be that way against a good thing you are not going to have many good neighbors. Ya'll wake up.

Jonathan Jackson said our concern is it seems a little bit like the tails wagging the dog in terms that we don't truly have a threshold to meet. It seems odd to me that the company is the entity that sets the target rather than the city sewage system. That should be the entity that sets the target.

Parameter issues were discussed.

Jonathan Jackson encouraged doing everything we can in order to keep this company here and discouraged doing things like calling and having their sewage cut off. This issue was discussed.

Councilman Eady said this Council, other than myself, were not aware of any of this until tonight. He said he encouraged the Mayor last week not to cut the sewage off. He then recommended getting a sample of sewage from the office and if its regular sewage, then he has no problem with accepting all that is in there now. He stated that the plant is completely different and that he has been assured by Mr. Jackson that it is cut off and there is no way they can use it.

Mr. Jackson confirmed that the plant is cut off from sewage at this time.

Councilman Eady said we want this company and we want to be a good neighbor.

Mr. Jackson brought the following 4 things to Council's attention: 1.) With the plant being located in the unincorporated area of Wilkinson County, maybe you could tell me what would stop this company from dropping their own water wells rather than being a City of Gordon water customer. 2.) With them being on Commissioner Creek and producing nearly potable sewage output, what would stop them from applying for an industrial discharge permit to go into Commissioner Creek? You would lose your largest sewage customer. 3.) What is stopping this company from pursuing annexation through Ivey? 4.) The IGA should have been done by the Gordon and Ivey attorneys, not the Wilkinson County Development Authority attorney. The CEO of Zschimmer & Schwarz asked does the City of Gordon not want us in the community.

These issues were discussed.

Mr. Jackson said the interpretation of the company with the problems that we had getting the IGA done was that the City of Gordon and the City of Ivey both were not acting where they should have been. The perception is there from this company that they have faced multiple roadblocks in these municipalities that they have had to work with. The perception is there.

Mayor Turner stated that the perception is incorrect.

Council Member Lawrence said this is our first time of hearing any of this, but I guess what I'm looking at is partnership and if we want to look outside of the new company, if we want to appear as a partnership town, we're going to have to give at some point, but cutting off sewage to offices is a roadblock to me and would not have killed us. We had to raise the millage rate and water and sewer rates on our citizens in Gordon so it would seem we would do everything possible to generate funds to offset costs.

Mayor Turner said we agreed in June and they sent in about 30,000 gallons of sewage since then from this area. He said his concern is we hear very little from the Development Authority and very little from Zschimmer & Schwarz, but this is not a criticism. We are only looking for a safeguard to make sure a mistake doesn't happen.

Council Member Lawrence inquired if we reached out to Zschimmer & Schwarz before the sewage was cut off.

Mayor Turner said we don't have a contact from Zschimmer & Schwarz.

Mr. Jackson interjected and said that is the function of the Development Authority to be the middle man between the company and the city.

The issue was discussed.

Mayor asked for someone to give the city some safeguards that an accident does not occur in which the sewage is sent into our plant.

Mr. Jackson, as a solution, proposed that the City of Gordon consider a resolution in support of this project that would eliminate any perception from the county from the Development Authority or from the company that there are intentional roadblocks being placed. A resolution in support of the project that also compels the Mayor to accept the company as a sewage customer once the thresholds are achieved.

Mayor said the city would agree to that. Mayor asked if the company was aware that the city of Gordon put the water line in out there and paid for it and that we are taking over an almost 20 year old sewage line owned by Ivey and that we are going to be responsible for the maintenance of it.

Mr. Jackson said the company is aware of the above and they are thankful.

Councilman Eady inquired how soon Mr. Jackson could get us a sample from their plant that they have already processed and they can tell us that this is what we're going to be putting in your sewage plant. If they could get us that, then by the time the plant is ready to start up we can have an answer to this problem.

Mayor explained that we haven't been able to get that because they're not ready to do that yet.

Mr. Jackson confirmed Mayor Turner's statement and explained that they are waiting for the bacterial levels to colonize to get to a certain threshold of saturation in order to get a good sample because that bacteria eats some of that material that comes in and processes it.

Mayor Turner stated he had no problem with a resolution and stressed that our main concern was that if they want to start up in December, and you can't give us a sample until the end of November, we may not can give you an okay that quickly and that is what we've been trying to impress on Zschimmer & Schwarz and the Development Authority.

Mr. John Williams made the neutral statement that everybody knows we want our county to grow and if you look at the census, we are losing population and the only way to gain people is by creating jobs. He encouraged being business friendly and agreed that we have let things go on with company's in the past that we should not have and we want to make sure that we protect our environment for our young people, but at the same time we want to be business friendly. He explained that the county did a tax abatement so it will be a while before taxes are collected on the Zschimmer & Schwarz Plant and he stated the county is willing to help in any way possible with the new plant.

Council Member Payne left at this time due to a family emergency.

For clarification, Jonathan Jackson said the company will pay tax collections on the very first year, but at a very low rate.

A motion was made by Councilman Eady and seconded by Council Member Lawrence to accept the sewage from the Zschimmer & Schwarz Office complex only, at this time, with the safeguards as discussed. We will do a resolution to make it more official. Voting for the motion were 4 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

Mayor reported that we have 13 sewage pumping stations and approximately 6 of them need a great deal of work. Three or four may need replacing at the cost of \$150,000.00 per unit. More details to be given later.

Mayor gave update on downtown debris at one particular property on Macon Road.

Attorney Green gave update on debris on property on Macon Road. He stated we are working on the comprehensive blight and debris package for the city to address these concerns. One of the main ones is storm damage to the Penn Chevrolet building. He reported on the progress being made on the clean-up of this property. Attorney Green will be drafting a letter giving those involved a certain time frame in order to have the issues resolved before further action is taken.

Mayor recommended that the entire property must be managed and taken care of in some capacity within 90 days.

Council Member Lawrence agreed with further written documentation since Mayor Turner has contacted them several times in the past to no avail.

Mayor reminded Council that a while back a committee called the Clean, Green, and Safe Committee was created to help address these type issues.

Mayor then recommended that Attorney Green be authorized to issue the letter as discussed.

Council Member Lawrence made the point that you can't talk to others about cleaning up their property until the city gets the downtown cleaned up.

Councilman Densley reported that the Clean, Green, and Safe Committee is supposed to meet on the 11th of this month.

Councilman Wynn said the committee meets on the 7th of this month.

A motion was made by Council Member Lawrence and seconded by Councilman Densley to give Attorney Green permission to write a letter to the owners of Penn Chevrolet with a time table of 90 days to clean the property up. Voting for the motion were 4 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

Mayor Turner announced that Council Member Phyllis Payne left earlier because her husband Cuyler Payne hit a deer and is hurt.

City Clerked stated there are four water leak adjustment requests and each is eligible for a one month adjustment. Mayor then presented the adjustments for Akira Pitts, Emmie Bass, Connie Rowell, and Danielle Patel. A motion was made by Council Member Lawrence and seconded by Councilman Wynn to approve all four water leak adjustments for a one month adjustment as presented. Voting for the motion were 4 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried. (Copy of water bill

adjustment requests attached.)

Mayor reported on storm damage at the Gordon Recreation Park from Hurricane Michael. The concession stand awning which extended approximately half the length of the building was torn from the building. Mayor presented a quote in the amount of \$4300.00 to install a 15' X 36" awning across the entire front of the concession stand and to pay for the awning out of the SPLOST Fund. (Copy of quote attached.) The City has a \$1000.00 insurance deductible. We do not know how much the insurance company will cover at this time.

A motion was made by Council Member Lawrence and seconded by Councilman Eady to accept the quote for \$4300.00 and to be paid out of the SPLOST recreation fund minus the insurance payment. Voting for the motion were 4 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

Mayor Turner reported that there is a vacancy on the City of Gordon Planning & Zoning Board and that Sherry Mitchiner has agreed to serve on the board. A motion was made by Councilman Eady and seconded by Councilman Wynn to appoint Sherry Mitchiner to the City of Gordon Planning & Zoning Board. Voting for the motion were 4 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

Mayor reported that the Clean, Green, & Safe Committee is active and moving. Their goal is to develop a comprehensive plan for the entire city.

The Council discussed a prospect for the Planning & Zoning Board/Building Inspector position currently being held by Supt. Melvin Lawrence who is ready to give up the position.

Councilman Eady reported that the Safer Fire Grant deadline was missed for this year but the city will submit an application for it next year. He also reported that they are in the process of applying for loans or grants to get a new fire truck to replace our 1990 model fire truck.

Mayor Turner said we will also be applying for equipment to be used by the Fire Department in case of a chemical spill.

Mayor said he would like to meet with each department in a work shop setting to discuss the departments responsibilities, wants, needs, etc. in detail with Council.

The next Council Meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2018 at 5:30 p.m.

Roy Mixon reported on the huge success of the Fall Line Festival and thanked all the sponsors. He also reported that the Ghost & Goblins event had one of the largest crowds ever in attendance for the event. Sherry Mitchiner and Donna Asbell have resigned from their positions with Main Street Gordon.

Councilman Eady thanked the County for helping us use the prisoners. They did a great job. The Mayor had them go around and clean up the little triangle in front of Lee Park and it looks real good. He also thanked the county for doing the clipping on the road edges, too. He said the city is really coming together and that's the result of working together between the city and the county and we want to send a big "thank you" to the County Commissioners.

Mayor has drafted a letter of thanks to the County Commissioners for their help.

A motion was made by Councilman Wynn and seconded by Councilman Eady to adjourn at 6:44 p.m. Voting for the motion were 4 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

Dec. 3, 2018
Approved & Adopted

Kenneth L. Turner
Mayor

Inana Brown
City Clerk