

Council Minutes
City of Gordon
January 7, 2019

The Council of the City of Gordon held a meeting on Monday, January 7, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. at the Gordon City Hall located at 115 College Street. Members present were Mayor Kenneth Turner and Council Members Bruce Daniel, Freddie Densley, Terry Eady, Rose Lawrence, Phyllis Payne, and George Wynn.

Mayor Turner called the meeting to order and welcomed all present. He then asked if anyone present had any urgent business that needed to be added to the agenda. Hearing none, he then asked Council for permission to change the order of the agenda to move both of the Planning & Zoning recommendations up to the first order of business. This was requested because Councilman Densley had to leave the meeting early and the Mayor wanted a full vote of Council on the Planning & Zoning recommendations.

A motion was made by Councilman Eady and seconded by Councilman Wynn to change the agenda around to fit that schedule. Voting for the motion were 6 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Councilman Wynn and seconded by Councilman Densley to accept the December 3, 2018 Work Shop Minutes and the December 3, 2018 Council Minutes as presented. Voting for the motion were 6 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

John Newberry, attorney representing Community Healthcare Systems, Inc., passed out a packet of information referring to the zoning request to re-zone property located at 218 Milledgeville Highway from R-3 to C-1 to allow for a medical facility. (Copy of packet attached.) He also displayed a plat of the property and a picture of the medical facility for viewing. He then gave some background information on a letter he received stating the property was zoned C-1 which is an approved item for a medical facility or they might not have purchased the property otherwise. He found out later that the property is zoned R-3 instead of C-1. Therefore, they are asking the property to be re-zoned to C-1. He then stated that the Planning & Zoning Board unanimously voted to recommend to the Council that the property be re-zoned to C-1. He then gave some background information on the cost of the property and the facility, and the zoning of the surrounding property. He then asked for the Council to vote in favor of the re-zoning and referred to the Planning & Zoning Minutes recommending the re-zoning. (Copy of Planning & Zoning Minutes attached.)

Carla Belcher, chief executive officer for Community Healthcare Systems, gave background information on what the system is and what it does for the community. It is a health center that gets some grant funding to help take care of the uninsured or under insured population. Most of the patients they see have some type of insurance. It is a doctors office, but what makes this system different is that they are able to see patients who are uninsured or under insured. She

presented a picture of the facility and then opened the floor for any questions.

Councilman Eady stated that other than the re-zoning part, the City of Gordon already has three doctors offices and up to four or five doctors and they are all less than a quarter of a mile from this location. He also said he has heard there may be a pharmacy added to the Community Healthcare Systems facility. He said his due diligence is to protect our doctors from having their patients taken away from them. He then stated that we need to go talk to our local doctors and pharmacists and see if they are in agreement with this new facility.

Ms. Belcher stated that she has not talked to them recently and did not do that type of research before the meeting this evening.

Council Member Lawrence questioned if the facility was mostly for the uninsured or under insured.

Ms. Belcher said Community Health Centers are for everybody. They are expected to see patients regardless of the ability to pay.

Council Member Lawrence stated that is the part she likes about the facility because you would not be able to go to any other doctor if you are under insured or uninsured so it would not effect any of the local doctors anyway. This would prevent people from having to go to the emergency room, etc. She does not consider picking up more people for healthcare as dipping into anyone's base. She looks at it as a facility providing healthcare for everybody and it doesn't matter what your income is.

Councilman Daniel asked Zoning Administrator Lawrence to report on the Planning & Zoning Meeting held on the re-zoning of the Community Healthcare Facility.

Zoning Administrator Lawrence reported that the reps from the Community Healthcare Facility basically presented the same information as was presented tonight. He also reported that the Planning and Zoning Board voted unanimously to recommend to Council that the re-request to re-zone the property be granted.

Wilkinson County Commissioner John Williams stated that he serves on the Board of Community Health and gave a brief history of the Board and services it provides. He expressed his concern that a lot of the small businesses in the community do not provide insurance for their employees. The purpose of Community Health Facilities is not to put other people out of business, but to serve people no one else wants to serve and to help cut down on emergency room visits. He presented to Council copies of letters he received from Senator Johnny Isakson

and Senator David Perdue in support of Community Healthcare Centers. (Copy of letters attached.) Commissioner Williams then asked Council for their support of the Community Healthcare Facility.

Councilman Wynn stated that he does not consider the Community Healthcare Facility as a business, but as a government entity who is competing with our small business owners.

Councilman Eady said the facility is also tax exempt so they will not be paying any taxes.

Council Member Lawrence said but they will be paying water and sewage and if we are in a crisis with money financially, every little bit helps.

Marjo Baisden stated it is very difficult for her to discuss this issue due to personal and sentimental reasons. The land to the right of the proposed property to be re-zoned belongs to her. It belonged to her grandfather, her parents, and then it was passed down to her. She expressed the importance of the family property to her and to her family. She stressed that she does not want this kind of atmosphere in her neighborhood. She also stressed that she is not opposed to this facility, but there are other options or places other than next door to her that this facility could be built. She again stressed that she does not want this facility next door to her.

Konreid Etheredge stated that he has land adjoining the Gordon Medical Center that is probably larger than the land being considered for the facility. Dr. Puri said he went to the City Hall in Gordon and asked where there was a piece of property in Gordon that he could build his facility at and he was told by the City Clerk the property that was available to build this type of facility on. Mr. Etheredge then asked Ms. Belcher where had they looked for property.

Ms. Belcher said they did look for other pieces of property after there was some opposition to the facility being in a multi-use area. She said it is unfortunate that they did not know about Mr. Etheredge's property. She stated they bought the property in good faith that it was could be used for what they wanted to be able to use it for.

Sheila Burney inquired if the facility would create new jobs.

Ms. Belcher stated that as the facility grows, she does believe it would create more jobs.

Council Member Lawrence stated she understands Ms. Baisden's personal grief and personal reasons but she does not look at the facility as a "these kind of people" because she looks at people as people and does not see it as a bunch of people hanging out and running over to the property next door. She just sees it as a healthcare facility taking care of people who are under

insured.

Ms. Baisden said and giving out drugs.

Council Member Lawrence said the Drug Store gives out drugs when a prescription is filled.

Ms. Baisden said it is not next door to me either.

Ms. Belcher presented another picture of a healthcare facility next door to a residence in Wrightsville.

Doretha Whipple inquired where the property was that they wanted to put the facility on.

Council Member Lawrence stated that it was at Rob Westin's Office.

Jason Powell, assistant CEO with Community Healthcare showed a picture of the existing office and then a picture of the building they are going to build. He indicated where privacy shrubs will be placed between their property and Ms. Baisden's property.

A motion was made by Council Member Lawrence and seconded by Councilman Densley to approve the recommendation of the Planning & Zoning Board to accept the recommendation of the Planning & Zoning Board. Voting for the motion were Councilman Daniel, Councilman Densley, Council Member Lawrence, and Council Member Payne. Voting nay were Councilman Eady and Councilman Wynn. Motion carried.

Mayor stressed that zoning regulations have to be adhered to and the city reserves the right to confer on this and see if there is any special exception, since the Council has heard opposition on both sides. The Council may ask to see drawings of placement of shrubs, etc. before this recommendation goes through, but the Council has approved the re-zoning as presented.

The next item on the agenda was the Planning & Zoning request to re-zone property owned by Kristin Pitts located at 189 Milledgeville Highway from R-1 to C-1. This item was tabled from the last meeting. Mayor called for a motion to take that motion back off the table. It doesn't need a second although we have to have a motion that we take the issue regarding Ms. Kristin Pitt's request to re-zone off the table and bring it back to Council for discussion. Copy of Planning & Zoning Minutes and related information were presented. (Copies of the related info is attached to these minutes.)

A motion was made by Council Member Lawrence to take the item off the table and bring it back back to Council for discussion.

Mayor then asked that all in favor of that motion please indicate by saying aye. There were 6 ayes and 0 nays.

Mayor said that the Council has already heard public input on the re-zoning request of Ms. Pitts and inquired if anyone had any new information to add.

Council Member Lawrence inquired if Ms. Pitts had gotten a building permit from the city.

Mayor stated it was his understanding that Ms. Pitts did not inquire on how the property was zoned or ask for setbacks, etc. They went to Zoning Administrator Lawrence and asked for a building permit. Mayor then asked Mr. Lawrence if he was correct in his statement.

Zoning Administrator Lawrence stated they came to him asking about zoning for that piece of property. He explained that his logic was if an attorney had occupied that same property for a number of years, he knew it had to be C-1 for her to operate, and that's basically what he based his decision on.

Mayor stated that Mr. Lawrence assumed it was C-1 and based on that, that's why he gave her the permit to start building.

Mayor Lawrence stated that is correct.

Council Member Lawrence asked why the Council at that time allowed her, the attorney, to stay there and operate a business.

Mayor stated it is his understanding that the attorney had been given a special exception to operate her lawyer's office there. When the attorney left, that option and permission no longer applied.

Council Member Lawrence stated we gave the attorney a special exception to operate there for 15 years even though it wasn't commercial.

Mayor confirmed that was his understanding.

Councilman Eady stated that is allowable by our zoning laws and that's what they went by at the time.

A motion was made by Councilman Eady and seconded by Council Member Payne to reject the Planning & Zoning Board's recommendation to re-zone the property owned by Kristen Pitts at 189 Milledgeville

Highway from R-1 to C-1. Voting for the motion were Councilman Daniel, Councilman Eady, Council Member Payne, and Councilman Wynn. Voting nay were Councilman Densley and Council Member Lawrence. Motion carried.

Mayor gave a brief summary on the report he received from Feeding GA Families. He gave Council a copy of the report he received. (Copy of the report attached.) They have asked to hold the food pantry once a quarter in Gordon at the City Annex.

City Annex Rental Form- Usage Guidelines was discussed. Mayor recommended that the room we call the voting room where we used to hold the Council Meeting is the only room we rent out. He reported on the loss of tables and chairs from the annex and the need to get more control over these type issues. He also reported on the building maintenance that is needed. On the rental application, under annex usage rules, the Mayor recommended changing the item that says "tables and chairs will be checked for damage" to "tables and chairs will be checked for damage and placed back in the original position". (Copy of City Annex Rental Form & Guidelines reflecting changes attached.)

A motion was made by Councilman Wynn and seconded by Councilman Eady to adopt the two changes to the City Annex Rental Form - Usage Guidelines. Voting for the motion were 6 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

Councilman Densley left the meeting at this time of 6:21 p.m.

City Clerk Towana Brown reported that the Beer & Wine Application renewal for Mittalben M. Patel for the Gordon Stop-N-Shop located at 166 Milledgeville Highway has been reviewed and recommended that it be approved for renewal. (Copy of Beer & Wine Application attached.)

A motion was made by Council Member Lawrence and seconded by Councilman Wynn to renew the Beer & Wine License for Mittalben M. Patel for the Gordon Stop-N-Shop. Voting for the motion were 6 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

Mayor reported that it is time to set the qualifying fee for the upcoming election and advertise.

City Clerk Brown said the seats up for election this year are Council Member seats. The qualifying fee is \$108.00 and we do need to advertise it and set this fee. (Copy of qualifying ad attached.)

A motion was made by Councilman Eady and seconded by Councilman Wynn to adopt the fee as mentioned by the Clerk and approve the advertising. Voting for the motion were 5 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

Mayor presented Water Leak Adjustment Request Form from Parris S. Smith for service located at 141 Burney Road. (Copy of Water Leak Adjustment Request Form attached.)

A motion was made by Council Member Lawrence and seconded by Councilman Wynn to accept the once per ten years Water Leak Adjustment request from Parris S. Smith. Voting for the motion were 5 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

Sherry Mitchiner was present and asked about her Water Leak Adjustment Request. (Copy of Water Leak Adjustment Request form attached.) City Clerk explained that her request was not eligible for an adjustment due to being in the deceased name. Ms. Mitchiner has recently put up a water deposit in her name.

A motion was made by Council Member Lawrence and seconded by Councilman Eady to accept the second reading and to adopt the GMEBS Retired Master Defined Benefit Retirement Plan Ordinance. (Copy of ordinance attached.) Voting for the motion were 5 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

Sonny Dixon cancelled his request today to be on the agenda today.

Mayor expressed the need to hold several Work Shops over the next few months.

Mayor reported on the request from Mayor of Ivey for their half of the tap fee for sewage line for Zschimmer & Schwarz. Mayor explained to her that we have just received the application for sewage usage from Zschimmer & Schwarz a few days ago and since that time has written the county requesting the tap fee be paid.

Mayor suggested having a Work Shop this Thursday at 5:30 p.m. Councilman Wynn and Councilman Eady can't attend this Thursday and suggested other possible meeting dates.

Mayor recognized Honorable Judge Cummings.

Councilman Daniel asked for an update on EPA violations and the proposed city annexation of Zschimmer & Schwarz.

Attorney Green stated that as to the violations, we may want to put it on an agenda to house that material and as to the annexation, no update has been received from the Development Authority on how to proceed with the annexation.

Council Member Lawrence asked for an update on the Sonny Dixon blight issue.

Mayor stated that a 90 day notice was issued to Mr. Dixon approximately thirty days ago.

Attorney Green stated that Chief Hall personally served Sonny Dixon with the notice on December 11, 2018.

Mayor said in response to the violations, we had two. We had to respond with a letter of corrective actions, which were put in Council's boxes. Mayor reported on corrective actions being performed.

Mayor commented on unaccounted for water loss and asked Supt. Lawrence to also comment on same.

Supt. Lawrence reported that last Monday he found a 6" water main busted near the old sewage treatment plant when he went to the fire hydrant located there. The line has been leaking at least a year. The leak has been fixed and since then the total well usage each day has dropped drastically.

Council Member Lawrence inquired if water on Highway 18 is coming from a leak or overflow from the manhole.

Supt. Lawrence stated that the water is overflow from the manhole. Due to all the rain there were several manholes that overflowed because the lift stations couldn't keep up with all the water.

Councilman Daniel then asked about the EPD violations at the Sewage Treatment Plant.

Supt. Lawrence reported that they are working on the lift stations and most of the violations, but not all of them have been corrected.

Councilman Daniel asked if there is an alligator at the Sewage Treatment Plant.

Councilman Eady stated there is and we try to protect him. He eats all the otters and muskrats.

Councilman Daniel inquired if this is the reason the employees won't get in the pond because he's heard them comment that they won't get in the pond unless they know where the gator is.

The issue was discussed.

A motion was made by Councilman Eady and seconded by Councilman Wynn to cancel the January 21, 2019 Council Meeting due to the M.L.K., Jr. Holiday. Voting for the motion were 5 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Council Member Payne and seconded by Councilman Eady to adjourn at 6:38 p.m.

Voting for the motion were 5 ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

February 4, 2019
Approved & Adopted

Kenneth L. TURNER
Mayor

Iwana Snow
City Clerk