

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF SKY VALLEY, GEORGIA
JULY 22, 2014
TUESDAY, 10:00 AM
FELLOWSHIP HALL, 817 SKY VALLEY WAY**

MINUTES

Mayor Goodgame called the meeting to order.

Those present: Mayor Goodgame, Council President Larsen, Councilors Carr, Greene, and Howard, City Manager Lapeyrouse, Chief Dills, Public Works Supervisor Cavalli, and City Clerk Cantrell.

Hayes Howard gave the invocation. Mayor Goodgame led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilor Carr made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 19 regular meeting, 2nd Council President Larsen, unanimously approved.

Council President Larsen made a motion to adopt the agenda, 2nd Councilor Greene, unanimously approved.

MAYOR'S REMARKS

Mayor Goodgame said that he spoke with the sub-contractor installing the Verizon tower yesterday. The contractor reported that Verizon plans to submit the zoning application this week. If everything goes according to schedule, it will be on the next council agenda for approval. They are still on target to begin construction in October and have the tower completed this year.

Quarry rezoning request has been approved by the Rabun County Planning & Zoning. It will be on the Rabun County Commission agenda this evening. He is meeting with a group of citizens from north Rabun this afternoon to prepare statements for the meeting. Mayor Goodgame also sent a letter to each County Commissioner urging them to deny the request.

Mayor Goodgame and Ray Becker have been working on the sewer issue in hopes that we can attract a small hotel/conference center, assisted living, condos, or other business to Sky Valley. Ray is on the Water and Sewer Authority Board and Goodgame is on the Industrial Development Authority Board. He said that since Clayton has opted out of the water and sewer consolidation, it has opened up a great deal of SPLOST funds that are reserved for sewer.

Ongoing negotiations continue with Harrison Merrill and Brook Cole regarding the old lodge and possible property donations.

The Marketing Committee is working very hard and meeting every other week. We have hired a marketing coordinator on a 90-day contract. The next marketing committee meeting is this Thursday at 10:00 AM. We are actively working on a Fall Festival that will take place while the hay bales are out. That is a great time of the year to showcase what we have in Sky Valley.

COUNCIL REMARKS

Councilor Carr said that she and the Mayor attended the GMA Annual Convention in Savannah. She said that she will pass along the information from her classes to city staff. She said she was very appreciative of the opportunity to attend.

Councilor Howard said that the beautification effort on Winding Ridge is much improved. Mayor Goodgame added that the Beautification Committee identified four major areas for improvement – the Winding Ridge entrance, City Hall, the Post Office, and the entrance. We will be focusing beautification efforts on these areas this year.

Councilor Carr asked if we could take down the yellow flagging around the old lodge. Chief Dills said he would take care of the flagging around the lodge.

Council President Larsen said that we need to take down the dead hemlocks on the rights of way this winter.

SPECIAL GUESTS

Beth Grimes, Bates-Carter – Presentation of FY 2013 Audit

Mayor Goodgame said we changed auditing firms this year, and that we feel really good about where we are heading with the new firm.

Ms. Grimes said she has worked with local governments for almost 20 years and said that their firm tries to be a resource for local governments. She presented highlights from the audit. She explained that our property taxes are collected on the front of our fiscal year and that is great for being able to fund expenses. Everyone always asks about fund balance so she gave information on what is fund balance and recommendations on how much the city should have. She said that the Georgia Finance Officers' Association, GFOA, recommends fund balance 15-25% of prior year expenses. We are currently at 42%. However, we have "earmarked" some of our fund balance for capital improvement projects and staff will be presenting an updated financial policy that will allow our locally restricted funds to be shown in the audit. She said her recommendation is to have 25%. She added that it is important to understand when and how we are using fund balance.

Water and Solid Waste. Our cash is up about \$14,000 from previous years. She explained that unrestricted funds are not shown the same way as they are in the general fund. It is called net working capital. Page 27 shows the water and garbage fund separately. We had a net income loss of almost \$82,000. This includes \$174,000 of non-cash depreciation expense. She encourages local governments to cover debt service and depreciation. Our debt service is around \$92,000, and we are breaking even which does not allow us to grow. She said that by covering the depreciation, it will help us be able to fund major repairs or expansion. Depreciation should cover improvements or major repairs so that we are not dependant on more debt. She said we want to see the depreciation amount being set aside in a capital reserve account. Ms. Grimes said she encourages governments to look at this and reserve the depreciation amount so that are not incurring interest costs. Usually, this happens in stages – revenue is received in two ways, by adding new customers or increasing rates.

She explained that they made recommendations for staff on how to implement better internal controls. She said the city is very blessed with the staff we have that they are very good to work with, very responsible, and that staff questioned things in the audit which is a great sign.

Mayor Goodgame said that we have implemented the suggestions to improve internal controls. According to the audit, we have \$536,000. He said our internal reporting shows funds that we have restricted. Our fund balance has steadily decreased over the last few years, and we cannot continue to reduce funds available when we have situations like we do now with the garbage truck.

CITY MANAGER & DEPARTMENT REPORTS – EXCEPTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Marketing Committee meets Thursday at 10:00.

Tentative date for Fall Fest is October 18th.

PTV Ordinance was effective July 1.

Steve Brett asked about repeat offenders putting garbage out early and it being scattered by animals. City Manager Lapeyrouse said that we send them a letter explaining garbage guidelines and we can charge them \$10 for us having to clean up their garbage.

City Manager Lapeyrouse said that it is very important to stack your limbs in one direction when putting limbs/branches out for chipping service. We provide 15 minutes of chipping free, and it is \$100 per hour after 15 minutes. It also helps staff be more efficient and cover more of the city on chipping days. Mayor Goodgame said Public Works Supervisor Rick Cavalli does a great job with his staff trying to address all our responsibilities, garbage, chipping, mowing, road repairs, etc.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning & Zoning Commission Report & Recommendation of Variance Request at 1824 Ridgepole

Planning & Zoning Chairman Ray Brooker said the Commission held a public hearing on the variance request, and that they will meet again to continue the hearing in September.

NEW BUSINESS

- Approval of FY 2013 Audit

Council President Larsen made a motion to approve the audit, 2nd Councilor Carr, unanimously approved.

- Transfer of funds from net assets to restricted capital

City Clerk Cantrell explained that \$125,000 funding from the general fund was used to begin the water system improvement projects. These projects were ultimately funded through GEFA loans and an ARC grant. The water fund never reimbursed the general fund, and we need to transfer the funds back to the general fund. Council President Larsen made a motion to approve the transfer, 2nd Councilor Greene, unanimously approved.

- Transmittal Resolution for the 2014 Rabun County Joint Comprehensive Plan

City Manager Lapeyrouse said that the Comprehensive Plan has been worked on for some time now, and we had many people attend workshops held by the Region Commission. The plan includes all of the cities in the County and the County and is submitted to Georgia Department of Community Affairs for comments and will come back to City Council for final approval. Having this plan in place is required to receive federal and/or state funding. Councilor Howard made a motion to approve, 2nd Councilor Greene, unanimously approved.

- Update Marketing Committee members – remove Milt Gillespie, add Steve Brett

Mayor Goodgame said that Milt Gillespie has recommended Steve Brett to take his place on the marketing committee. Councilor Greene made a motion to approve Steve Brett replacing Milt Gillespie on the committee, 2nd Councilor Carr, unanimously approved.

- Contribution of \$500 to Garden Club for fall hay bale decorations

Mayor Goodgame said we have traditionally made a contribution to the Garden Club for the hay bales. Council President Larsen made a motion to approve a \$500 contribution, 2nd Councilor Greene. Councilor Carr asked if anyone knew what the Garden Club has in their budget. No one in attendance knew. The motion passed unanimously.

- Speed tables

Mayor Goodgame explained that we installed a temporary speed bump. He said this was following the recommendation of the Public Safety Committee to address Chief Dills' concern over speeding on Sky Valley Way. He said he has received lots of emails for and against the speed bump. He said someone said that we have not had problems in that area and asked "why fix something that's not broken". City Manager Lapeyrouse spoke with Attorney Dickerson regarding the speed tables, and the fact that we have been made aware of a speeding problem in this area. If we are aware of a problem, Attorney Dickerson said that we are at risk for liability if we do not address the problem.

Chief Dills explained that under Georgia law, he does not have a means to slow traffic in this area. He could not get approval to use radar on this portion of the road. He said that the speed bump has worked. We have a great deal of foot and golf cart traffic on this street. The speed table would be much less jarring. Mayor Goodgame said that we are talking about installing a speed table like the ones on Main Street in Clayton and using pavers similar to those at the front entrance.

Councilor Howard said that we need a speed table closer to Driver Lane. Council President Larsen said he owns the house on Big Bear that is rented. The tenant has commented to him about how fast people drive down that hill. Councilor Carr said she is in favor of the speed tables. She said that even though people have commented that we have never had an incident, the Timeshares has recently heated the swimming pool and the pool has been much busier this summer. Councilor Greene said that people are going too fast before they reach Tahoe, and said a four-way stop might be an idea.

Mayor Goodgame said that we have discussed making a four-way stop at Sky Valley Way, Driver, and Tahoe. He said that he believes the speed tables will be more effective because people will not stop at the stop signs.

Sara Bennett said that she lives in a university town in Statesboro and they have had similar issues there. She said rumble strips remind people to slow down, and that she is in favor of both rumble strips and speed tables. Mayor Goodgame said that we have discussed rumble strips, and they do get your attention but do not make you slow down.

Barbara Kobacker suggested that we put a notice at Timeshares asking guests to slow down. She said that even though we can't give tickets, we could blue light people and pull them over.

Helen Kleiber said that several years in Columbus, GA a lady was hit and killed in a grocery store parking lot. She is in favor of two speed tables.

Ron Jakubiak said he understands that we need to do something, and encouraged we make the tables wider than five feet. He said that we need to start enforcing stop signs and give tickets.

Reuel Hamilton said that he thinks a speed table should be able to be crossed at the speed limit on that road. He asked Chief Dills to explain why we cannot give speeding tickets. Chief explained the process to be able to issue speeding citations, and that to cite for "basic rules" or "too fast for conditions" under state law, you must have a scientific measure of proving someone was driving too fast for conditions.

Mayor Goodgame said he wants everyone to know that we have not made this recommendation without doing a lot of work behind the scenes. Yes, we need to remove the temporary speed bump, but we need to install something better. He said he appreciated everyone's input.

Council President Larsen made a motion to install two speed tables, 2nd Councilor Carr. Councilor Greene said he understands the bump has been an issue for people going too fast over the bump, but he is still concerned with how fast people will be going by Tahoe. He said he believes we will eventually need a stop sign by Tahoe. Mayor Goodgame said that we have looked at areas for the speed tables, and one of the possibilities is where we painted the crosswalk by Driver Lane. Councilor Howard said he is in favor of the speed tables with one being placed just before Tahoe and Driver and one a little farther down on Sky Valley Way than the temporary bump. Mayor Goodgame called for the vote adding that the speed tables will be installed at Chief Dills' recommended locations. The motion passed unanimously.

- Garbage

Mayor Goodgame said that our current garbage truck is out of service and needs a great deal of repairs. We do not have the funds reserved to replace the truck, and we are discussing whether we should replace the truck and raise garbage rates or install a compactor. City Manager Lapeyrouse presented the survey results. The survey was sent to the city's email distribution list.

Councilor Howard said that if we install a compactor and there is not a garbage fee, citizens will be paying for it in the form of a tax increase. He said that we have to consider our aging population and continuance of the service we are currently providing.

Mayor Goodgame said that as part of continuing our current service, we have to consider the time to collect garbage, the bears and other animals getting into garbage and scattering it.

Council President Larsen said that one-third of the survey respondents said they like curbside service, and that we really need to consider this amount of people. Mayor Goodgame said that the majority of people were in favor of the compactor, and we will have a provision to collect garbage at homes for residents who need it.

Councilor Carr asked if we are talking about dumpsters or compactors. Mayor Goodgame said we are talking about a compactor that will only be accessible by code. Councilor Carr asked about what size of truck would be coming to pick up the compactor. City Manager Lapeyrouse said that it is not like the regular collection truck, it is a smaller truck that holds the compactor. Councilor Carr asked if we can pick up garbage once a week until we make a decision. City Manager Lapeyrouse responded that there is too much garbage in the summer to only pick up once a week.

Public Works Supervisor Cavalli said that we are doing our very best in our current situation to keep the city clean. It is a very daunting task, and we need to make a decision as soon as we can. We are currently collecting garbage by hand and then having to take it down to the landfill and unload by hand.

Lynn Becker asked what the compactor would look like and how it would be accessed. City Manager Lapeyrouse said that it would have a door that you open, and that we can enclose it to make it more aesthetically pleasing. Mayor Goodgame said there are three possible locations: where our current tractor shed is depending on negotiations with Harrison Merrill, city owned lots across from entrance on Bald Mountain, Lost Valley where we have gravel stored. He said that it will also depend on what the contractor says they can access the compactor and electricity availability.

Barbara Kobacker said that where they stay in FL in the winter has a compactor adding that it is a wonderful thing and it works as long as it is properly maintained.

Ray Becker asked if we could have someone temporarily to take our dumpsters. He suggested putting it on Knob Drive because it cannot be within 150 feet of a well.

Sam LaMonte asked why we cannot contract curbside service. City Manager Lapeyrouse said that she has asked for quotes. She spoke with the contractor who does collection in Clayton and Hiawassee, and is waiting for a quote. Mr. LaMonte said that we are not a poor community and people can afford more money for garbage collection.

Sara Bennett said that we are going around and around with something that can be solved very simply. Why don't we buy a new truck and pick up garbage once a week?

Don Haney said he has a problem with the way the survey was written because it makes it sound like a "freebie" if we install a compactor. The expense will go in the tax base.

Steve Brett said this came up six or seven years ago and was thoroughly researched at that time. He suggested the public works committee to work on this and present a plan for council's approval.

Mayor Goodgame said that the council did not intend to make a decision today. We wanted comments and input.

- Place to hold events – postponed until August meeting.

PUBLIC FORUM AND GENERAL COMMENTS

Linda Durrence thanked the police department because they do so much for us. She said that she had an emergency at her office and she called our police department who responded very timely and stayed at her office until the ambulance arrived.

John Hodges said that on behalf of the residents on Winding Ridge, he wanted to thank everyone who has worked on the beautification project at the entrance to their street.

City Manager Lapeyrouse read a letter that Jim Martindale requested her to read during public comments regarding the newly installed golf cart lanes on Driver Lane. A copy of this letter is attached hereto. Mayor Goodgame said that with the new PTV Ordinance we needed to provide a location for regular golf carts to be allowed on streets. He said that this incident happened before we installed “share the road” signs. If this continues to be an issue, we will revisit.

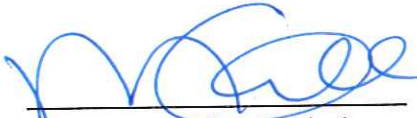
Council President Larsen made a motion to adjourn, 2nd Councilor Howard, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted:



Hughel Goodgame, Mayor

Attested:



Mandi Cantrell, City Clerk