

**REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 8, 2010**

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Washington, Georgia, held their regular monthly meeting on Monday, March 8, 2010, 6 PM at the Edward B. Pope Conference Center. Mayor W. E. Burns presided.

Present were Mayor Burns, Council members Barnett, Cullars, Eaton, Pope, Rainey and Tutt. Also present were City Administrator Eskew, City Clerk Danner, City Attorney Representative Kayla Cooper and City Police Chief Davis.

Visitors present were: Ella Binns, Henry Harris, Norris Ware, Charles Jackson, Andrew Jackson, Michael Wylie, Clara Sutton, Ruth Rogers, Mary Burt, Bill Branan, Susan Branan, Betty Armour, Hattie Callaway, Travis Armour, Cindy Bounds, Shameco Tutt, Windy Harden, Tom Wells, Darius Jenkins, Bill Steed, Ed Crew, Lizzie Crew, Barbara Burns, Rachel Jackson, Ed Anderson, Sr., Felicia Browner, Joanne Pettus, Janette Thomas, James Thomas, Mike Scarborough, Mark Waters, Connie Zello, Tim Zello, Doris Asbury, Trudy Cullars, Clifford Jones, Blake Thompson, Sarah Davis, Jan Hampton and Kip Burke of the News Reporter.

The meeting was opened in prayer by Council member Tutt followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES APPROVED

On motion by Eaton, second by Cullars, council approved 6 to 0 the minutes of the regular meeting held February 8, 2010 pending a correction to item under Council Reports concerning color stalemate and a called meeting held February 22, 2010.

AGENDA APPROVED

On motion by Eaton, second by Pope, council approved 6 to 0 the meeting agenda noting that there would be no report from Tourism and Chamber and approving an executive session to follow the regular meeting to discuss two personnel issues.

MAIN STREET UPDATE – DAVID JENKINS

Main Street Director David Jenkins gave updates on environmental testing at the old NAPA site, homebuyer education classes, CHIP lead testing and the Fitzpatrick Hotel.

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE CDBG APPLICATION

On motion by Eaton, second by Cullars, council approved 6 to 0 a resolution authorizing the submittal of a CDBG application. Resolution follows:

WHEREAS, the governing body of the City of Washington authorized the filing of a 2010 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), including all understandings and assurances contained therein; and

WHEREAS, the governing body directs and authorizes the Mayor of the City of Washington to act in connection with the application and to provide such additional information as may be required; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Washington has provided citizens an adequate opportunity to participate in the development of the application by holding at least one public hearing in the locality before submission of the application; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Washington maintains files that contain documentary evidence that the hearing was held. Also, that the evidence includes a copy of the actual notice of public hearing; and,

WHEREAS, the citizen participation process meets the requirements of the Georgia DCA City Participation Plan as outlined in the DCA, CDBG regulations; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Washington commits to providing the matching funds required as proposed in the CDBG application and also leverage funds.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Washington do hereby authorize the filing of a CDBG to the Georgia DCA, by the deadline of April 1, 2010.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor of the City of Washington is authorized to complete and sign all documents necessary to submit a full application for funding.

Adopted this 8th day of March, 2010.

URA REPORT – CHARLES JACKSON

URA Chair Charles Jackson reported that the URA is in the process of acquiring the Anderson Service Station property.

The Pope Center Hotel project has two submitted proposals: one from Gourmet Hospitality Services and one from the Somata Group. The next URA meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2010, 3 PM in the Council Chambers of City Hall to discuss these proposals.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Chief Davis presented the monthly report and thanked council for the purchase of three new vehicles which should be equipped for road service soon. The new officers are progressing well and on schedule.

Chief Davis was asked about an incident at Club 44 and asked to conduct crosswalk stings on Whitehall and at the east side entrance to the square at Talk of the Town.

DDA UPDATE

Council member Eaton advised that the next DDA meeting will be held March 18, 2010, 8:30 AM at Farmers State Bank.

USE OF SQUARE – NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

City Clerk Danner presented a request received from Wilkes Ministers United for use of the square on Thursday, May 6, 2010, beginning at noon for observance of the National Day of Prayer. On motion by Eaton, second by Cullars, council approved request 6 to 0.

COUNCIL REPORTS:

RAINEY: Council member Rainey asked the status of a proposed Community Center. Mayor Burns advised that the CSRA RDC is working on this project.

Rainey also asked about collection of outstanding utility debts. City Administrator Eskew advised that GMA debt collection services will be used.

Rainey asked that strategic planning be added to the spring retreat agenda. Retreat is tentatively scheduled for May 2010.

TUTT: Council member Tutt advised that Work Ready Assessment testing has been completed and that Wilkes County is work certified. Tutt stressed that education is the key to jobs in the community.

Tutt reminded those present that as a public service all regular meetings of council are televised on Comcast.

CULLARS: Council member Cullars expressed concern over high utility bills that customers have received the past two months. Cullars also asked about outstanding debt from the previous owners of the Fitzpatrick hotel.

Cullars asked that some \$250,000 be set aside to fund the re-opening of the pool at Booker Park. This item will be added to the retreat agenda.

Cullars asked that council consider the renaming of a section of Lexington Avenue to Obama Blvd. and Whitehall Street to M.L. King at the April meeting of council.

Cullars also commented that a recent newspaper article concerning the conviction of former police secretary Tammy Land did not include a photograph of Mrs. Land.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES

City Administrator Eskew reported on a recent Electric Committee meeting. New billing format has been in place since January with new format containing more information for the customer. Levelized billing began the end of February. Customers may sign up for levelized billing by seeing City Clerk Danner. Committee also discussed decreasing the penalty for senior citizen customers from 10% to 5% following federal guidelines criteria.

MAYOR'S UPDATES

Mayor Burns reminded those present that the 2010 Census will soon begin and encouraged all citizens to accurately fill out the forms as this is the means by which federal funds are allocated.

Mayor Burns advised that 2009 tax bills will probably go out in May 2010.

Mayor Burns also advised that a Financial Fitness for Home Ownership class will be held at the Pope Center on March 20, 2010, 9 am to 3 pm.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mayor and Council entered into executive session at 6:40 PM to discuss two previously approved personnel matters.

Mayor and Council re-convened in open session at 6:50 PM.

Attorney Cooper gave report that two personnel matters were discussed in executive session with no final action taken.

On motion by Eaton, second by Pope, council approved 6 to 0 Mayor Burns signing an executive session affidavit.

ADJOURNMENT: On motion by Tutt, second by Cullars, council approved 6 to 0 adjournment at 6:55 PM.

_____MAYOR

_____CLERK