

**SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
APRIL 30, 2020**

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Washington, Georgia, held a special called meeting work session on Thursday, April 30, 2020, at the Edward B. Pope Conference Center. Mayor William deGolian presided.

Present were Mayor deGolian and council members Armour, Cullars, Hill, Mahoney and Wagner. Denard was on vacation, he communicated via telephone. Also present were City Administrator deBin, City Clerk Evans and City Attorney Fleming.

Visitor present was Assistant City Administrator Dill.

Call to order by Mayor deGolian. Hill opened the meeting with prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Wagner.

AGENDA APPROVED: On motion by Armour, second by Hill. Approved 6-0.

Re-opening of businesses – this week as we follow the Governor’s orders. To continue practicing safety measures as well as social distancing. Mayor commended Dill on the social distancing set-up.

Next, Mayor deGolian turned the meeting over to Administrator deBin. deBin informed the council of his first month on the job.

City operations improvement all budget – The improvement will not happen overnight – there will be changes of how the city spend money.

- i. Domain have changed to wga.gov. Capital Data will help setting up email addresses at no charge. Hill is not receiving any emails.
- ii. Delinquent tax collection letters sent out and advises that the customer have 30 days. On the day of the 31st pre-levy procedures will take place thru Appalachian Services. We will not set up payment plans.
- iii. Delinquent utilities interfere with cash flow. New Utility Billing Policy will keep the due date of the 15th of the month, penalty will take place on the 16th, (penalty is added now anytime after the 25th), cutoff will take place on the 22nd (now the cutoff take place on the 4th of the next month), and if the services has been disconnected there will be a \$75 reconnection fee added. Also, the \$150 balance in which some have carried over will need to be paid off in the next 6 months. deBin advised that there will be a letter placed in the bills notifying our customers of the change. Mahoney stated that all council need to vote on these changes, he believes this is not the time for these changes, during this time of a

pandemic. Mahoney states that action on all lines of the Administrator's budget cuts need to be voted on individually.

- iv. deBin & selected council rode around and checked on properties with old cars and other items that are not pleasing to the eyes. There has need been a sweep of the 160 city streets. After deBin, council and code enforcement assessed violations, 207 addresses found, some with multiple violations, will be receiving letters to correct problems. Cullars advised that there are companies who will remove the junk cars and reimburse the owners for those cars.

School street cemetery need attention. The historical property which also need signs. Historic Properties is one of the areas of budget cuts which will impact Washington Historical Museum and Callaway Plantation. deBin explained the extended plan is to find someone to take on the responsibility of running these properties from the city's budget.

Some of the other cuts would be from the Fire Department's budget, over \$100,000. Cullars stated that when the economy was doing very well, there were about 4 full-time fireman and the others were volunteers. Now we have about 12 full time fireman and the manufacturing industry is not doing very well. The Fire Chief and his crew came to the conclusion of taking hourly pay cuts so that no one loses their job, the hourly cuts would include the chief will take a pay cut of \$2 hourly and \$1 hourly for the fireman.

Budget cuts proposal totaling more than \$875,000. Temporarily closing of Booker Park Pool. The pool is closed at this time due to the pandemic, this will save \$47, 557. Mahoney stated that he cannot go along with closing of the pool if the other sites such as Callaway and the Museum are still operating and are not making a profit.

Other cuts include, General Government, Libraries, Main Street, Parks & Recreation, Animal Control, Maintenance Shop, The Pope Center, Community Development, Electric, and Debt Service.

On Motion by Mahoney and second by Hill to adjourn regular session @ 8:35 PM and go into and Executive Session.

- A. Items discussed
 - i. Service Delivery Strategies – Sherriff Department
 - ii. Code Enforcement/Building Official personnel

On Motion by Wagner and second by Hill to adjourn executive session and return to regular session @ 9:54 PM. On motion by Armour, second by Mahoney to sign affidavit on one legal and one personnel.

On Motion by Wagner and second by Armour to remove the (1) item, personnel cut, and approval of strategic budget cuts recommendations put before the council.

Vote 3 – 3 (No: Cullars, Hill, & Mahoney); (Yes: Armour, Denard, Wagner) Mayor breaks tie. Budget strategies approved.

Question by Mahoney, "Is this with the idea that we are going to come back and look at Callaway Plantation; what is the timeline?") deBin stated yes, this should take place quickly, the council has to decide.

On Motion by Armour and second by Wagner to remove the \$150 carryover charge off utility bills. Vote 4 – 2 (Yes: Armour, Wagner, Hill, Denard – No: Cullars, Mahoney)

ADJOURNMENT: On motion by Cullars, second by Wagner City Council Meeting adjourned at 10:18 PM.

_____MAYOR

_____CLERK