

**REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 11, 2010**

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Washington, Georgia, held their regular monthly meeting on Monday, January 11, 2010, 6 PM at the Pope Conference Center. Mayor W. E. Burns presided.

Present were Mayor Burns, council members Avery, Barnett, Cullars, Eaton, and Pope. Also present were City Administrator Eskew, City Clerk Danner, City Attorney Fleming and City Police Chief Davis. Council members elect Rainey and Tutt were also present. Council member Mahoney was not present.

Visitors included: Henry Harris, David Jenkins, Fulani Doughty, Mike Scarborough, Wanda Cox, Bill Steed, Norris Ware, Kathryn Anderson, Edward Anderson, Mildred Hudson, Barbara Bacon, Charles Jackson, Shameco Tutt, Carrington Tutt, Daria Jenkins, Darius Jenkins, C. Carol Cartledge, Albert Rucker, Crystal Beharry, Janette Thomas, James Thomas, Betty Hamilton, Hattie Callaway, Polly Fievet, Lawrence Burton, Andrew Jackson, Bill Branan, Susan C. Branan, Blake Thompson, Clifford Jones, Uellis Tutt, Angie Strother, Peggy Anderson, Rita Horton, John Horton, Robert Geiger, Edward Franklin, Bobby Mills, Kim Evans, Treyvon Booker, Taaliyah Booker, Jessica Booker, Chiquita Harden, Windy Harden, Jovares Harden, Tyrin Fanning, Dot Jordon, Jackie Davis, Jami Davis, Kenneth Echols, Linda Echols, Ann Bates, Rachel Jackson, Barbara Burns, Wayne Madden, Marshall Waters II, Bettye Armour, Travis Armour, Marion Cullars, Joylita Booker, Hattie McManus, Larry Bell, Felicia Browner, Loretta Fanning, Roger Harper, Ronnie Futch, Mozelle Doughty, Alice Garrard, Kay Finnell, Eddie Finnell, Patricia Young, Letitia Callaway, Hattie Callaway, Sheila Hill and Kip Burke of the News Reporter.

Rev. Avery opened the meeting in prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES APPROVED

On motion by Eaton, second by Cullars, council approved 5 to 0 the minutes of a Public Hearing held December 14, 2009, the regular meeting held December 14, 2009 and a Public Hearing held December 22, 2009.

OATH OF OFFICE

City Attorney Fleming administered the oath of office to newly elected council members Rainey and Tutt and also to returning council member Eaton.

2010 MUNICIPAL APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Burns recommended that Barry Fleming be appointed as City Attorney. On motion by Eaton, second by Cullars, council approved appointment 6 to 0.

Mayor Burns recommended that Michael L. Davis be appointed as City Police Chief. On motion by Eaton, second by Cullars, council approved appointment 6 to 0.

Mayor Burns recommended that Debbie L. Danner be appointed as City Clerk. On motion by Eaton, second by Cullars, council approved appointment 6 to 0.

Mayor Burns recommended that Michael P. Eskew be appointed as City Administrator. On motion by Eaton, second by Cullars, council approved appointment 6 to 0.

Mayor Burns recommended that Rev. Edward Anderson be appointed as Municipal Judge. Motion by Cullars, second by Rainey, to approve the recommendation of Rev. Anderson; discussion followed concerning the service of Judge Hardin. Council member Barnett made a motion to re-appoint Judge Hardin as Municipal Judge, second by Eaton, with council voting 3-3-1 on this motion. Council members Cullars, Rainey and Tutt voted against this motion with Mayor Burns voting against the motion, breaking the tie

vote. Council then voted on the original motion to approve Rev. Anderson as Municipal Judge, 3-3-1 with council members Barnett, Eaton and Pope voting against the motion and Mayor Burns voting for the motion breaking the tie vote.

AGENDA APPROVED

On motion by Eaton, second by Cullars, council approved the meeting agenda 6 to 0.

TOURISM UPDATE – ASHLEY BARNETT

Tourism Director Barnett reminded those present of the January 18, 2010, MLK Parade which will begin behind the old high school on Hospital Drive. Parade lineup is at 1 PM and the entrance fee is \$10.00.

Mrs. Barnett also advised of a Clarks Hill Partnership meeting to be held in Washington during January and also Tourism Day at the Capitol.

Revolutionary Days events are being planned for February 12 – 14, 2010.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE UPDATE – ALAN SOTO

Chamber Director Soto advised that renewal notices for chamber membership are in the mail. Soto also advised that the events calendar is updated on the website.

MAIN STREET UPDATE

Main Street Director David Jenkins advised that property acquisition for Rusher Street is almost complete and work is progressing.

There is a job fair scheduled for January 21, 2010, 4 to 7 PM at the Pope Conference Center for Shaw Industries workers at Plant Vogtle.

POLICE DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Police Chief Mike Davis presented the monthly report and thanked council for the approval of new Glock 40 weaponry.

Council member Cullars asked that the Police Department make sure that all street crossings are blocked for the upcoming MLK Jr. Parade.

Chief Davis was also questioned about checkpoints in District 1 and how it is determined where to post checkpoints.

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING

Council member Eaton advised that the January 2010 DDA meeting will be held January 21, 2010, 8:30 AM at Farmers State Bank; and then followed by a Economic Development meeting at the Mary Willis Library beginning at 10:30 AM.

CITY ATTORNEY UPDATE

City Attorney Fleming advised that three parcels in the Rusher Street project have been brought before the Wilkes County Superior Court for settlement.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

City Administrator Eskew reminded those present of a Zoning Hearing on January 12, 2010, 8:30 AM in the Council Chambers of City Hall to consider the re-zoning of property along Georgia Avenue from R-3A to R-3.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

On motion by Eaton, second by Cullars, council approved 6 to 0 the following appointments to boards and commissions as recommended by Mayor Burns.

Patricia Young to replace Marion Tutt Jr. on the Library Board
Mark Waters – re-appointed to the Planning Commission
Pete Gartrell and Henry Bowen – re-appointed to the Board of Zoning Appeals
Michelle White and Ed Pope Jr – re-appointed to the Parks & Recreation Board
Patty D. Booker – appointment to the Parks & Recreation Board
Mike Hardy and Laura Toburen – re-appointment to the Tree Commission

COUNCIL REPORTS

BARNETT: Council member Barnett welcomed new council members Rainey and Tutt and thanked those in attendance for coming.

Barnett also thanked those involved in making the Snow of the Square during the recent Christmas season a success.

EATON: Council member Eaton also welcomed the new council members and further stated that council needs to work as a team for the good of the community.

RAINEY: Council member Rainey thanked everyone for their support and warm welcome.

Rainey asked about securing USDA funds for a Community Center and pool complex. Rainey also asked that in the meantime could some form of flat rate fee for use of the Pope Conference Center be looked into.

POPE: Council member Pope welcomed new members.

Pope asked when the renewal of the Pope Conference Center contract would be addressed. This will be discussed during the upcoming retreat.

TUTT: Council member Tutt thanked everyone for his election to council and stated that his goal is to impartially and fairly represent the city; to put people before politics and to work for the greater good of the community.

Tutt stated that one of his early focuses will be on obtaining Work Ready status.

CULLARS: Council member Cullars commented on a recent News Reporter article concerning a complaint that he had made concerning the Voter Registration Office. Cullars is concerned with mother, daughter and son-in-law working in the same office.

AMEND CITY ORDINANCE: SECTION 6-43(a) (2) & (3)

On motion by Cullars, second by Rainey, council voted 5 to 1 to amend City Ordinance 6-43 (a) (2) to read: Closing time Fridays shall be 3:00 a.m. and Section 6-43(a) (3) to read: Saturday closing time shall be 2 a.m. Council member Pope voted against the motion.

VIDEO BROADCAST OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

On motion by Council member Cullars, second by Rainey, to have council meetings taped for broadcast by Comcast Cable at an estimated cost of \$275 per regular meeting, council voted 3-3-1. Council members Barnett, Eaton and Pope voted against the motion. Mayor Burns voted for the motion, breaking the tie vote.

CITY CHARTER CHANGE TO “STRONG MAYOR” FORM OF GOVERNMENT

On motion by Cullars, second by Rainey, to change the City Charter to a “Strong Mayor” form of government. Changes to be made through HomeRule.

After discussion both for the motion and against any changes to the charter, Council member Barnett made a motion to table this matter for further discussion at the January 29, 2010, council retreat, second by Eaton, council voted 3-3-1. Voting against this motion were Cullars, Rainey and Tutt. Mayor Burns voted against this motion breaking the tie vote.

A vote was then taken of the original motion made by Cullars of 3-3-1. Voting against the motion were Barnett, Eaton and Pope. Mayor Burns voted for the motion breaking the tie vote.

City Attorney Fleming will research this matter and present information to council at the January 29, 2010 retreat.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS

Mayor Burns advised some of upcoming events during January: a hotel forum on January 19, 7 PM at the Pope Conference Center; Mayor's Day events January 22-25 in Atlanta; Council Retreat on January 29, 2010, 9 AM at the Pope Conference Center; and, a Home Foreclosure seminar on February 27, 2010, beginning at 10 AM at the Pope Conference Center.

ADJOURNMENT: On motion by Cullars, second by Tutt, council approved adjournment 6 to 0 at 7:05 PM.

_____MAYOR

_____CLERK