

**REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 8, 2012**

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Washington, Georgia, held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, October 8, 2012, 6 PM at the Edward Pope Conference Center. Mayor Ames Barnett presided.

Present were Mayor Barnett, council members Armour, Cullars, Harris, Rainey, Scarborough and Tutt. Also present were City Administrator Eskew, City Clerk Danner and City Attorney Fleming.

Visitors are listed in the Work Session held on October 8, 2012.

The meeting was opened in prayer by Attorney Fleming followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES APPROVED – On motion by Cullars, second by Tutt, council approved 6 to 0 the minutes as presented adding to the regular meeting of September 10, 2012, an item by Council member Tutt concerning the pros and cons of the city and/or URA handling the Gordon Street school property.

MEETING AGENDA APPROVED – On motion by Cullars, second by Tutt, council approved 6 to 0 the meeting agenda as presented adding an executive session for a personnel issue at the conclusion of the regular meeting.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – DAVID JENKINS – Mr. Jenkins reported on a recent GICH retreat to Macon to see a housing and multi-use development which was sponsored by the Housing Authority of Macon.

Jenkins urged citizens to view and use the city's website and also reminded citizens of the "Notify Me" program.

Those interested in small business consulting and loan applications should contact Main Street representative Joe Willis.

Jenkins requested approval of the square reservations calendar adding an event on October 31, 2012 for Trunks of Treats sponsored by the First Baptist Church and a November 12, 2012, Veteran's Day Memorial sponsored by Wilkes Ministers United. On motion by Harris, second by Scarborough, council approved 6 to 0 the reservations.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT – Council member Cullars requested that the Police Department conduct sidewalk checks and cross-walk stings in the city and along Whitehall Street.

MAYOR'S UPDATES – Mayor Barnett advised that the Police Committee and the Water/Sewer Committee had met on preliminary 2013 budget work.

Mayor Barnett recognized the good participation from downtown merchants in the fall Square-crows event.

Mayor Barnett advised of some citizen complaints on utility bills and gave a brief overview of the way the city purchases power through municipal owned MEAG.

RAINEY – Council member Rainey requested that the city continue to contact Comcast Cable Company about the need for a local customer payment location.

CULLARS – Council member Cullars made a motion that effective January 1, 2013, all utility accounts must be in current occupants name and further that upon the death of a utility customer, the account must be changed to the current occupants name within 30 days after the death, second by Tutt, council approved motion 6 to 0.

Cullars made a motion that all penalties for senior citizens (aged 65 and over) be waived beginning January 1, 2013, with the stipulation that the account must have been in the senior's name for a period of one year, second by Tutt, council approved motion 6 to 0.

TUTT – Council member Tutt asked City Administrator Eskew if he could predict if there would be a decrease in electric rates for the upcoming year. Eskew responded that MEAG currently predicts that the city's electric rate would increase some 7.9% over the 2012 amount, and that the city had absorbed

a 20% increase in 2011 and a 14% increase in 2012; most of the predicted 2013 increase can be traced to environmental costs.

Tutt further advised that the community is upset about utility rates and that council members from District 1 receive numerous calls about utility rates. Tutt requested that City Administrator Eskew provide information on the number of customers in District 1 and District 2 on the cut off list each month.

CHARLES JACKSON – URA – Charles Jackson, Chairman of the URA, requested that the city turn over the Gordon Street school property to the URA for possible mixed use development and further that any auction funds and trailer sale funds be turned over to the URA to be used for upkeep of the property.

Council discussed a possible CDBG grant application process and timeline. Council also noted that Christian Lentz of the CSRA RDC (the original writer of the city’s SWWURP) is in the process of studying viable options for this property.

Council member Tutt made a motion to turn over the Gordon Street school property along with any auction and sale funds to the URA, second by Cullars, council voted 3-3-1. Voting against the motion were council members Armour, Harris and Scarborough. Mayor Barnett voted against the motion, breaking the tie vote.

CULLARS – Council member Cullars asked about the lease renewal for Serenity Behavioral. City Administrator Eskew is working on this matter.

Cullars asked about the status of electric meter testing and the move to digital meter for accuracy. Cullars also asked if there were funds left in the budget for sidewalks repairs and also asked about the current state LAARP program and the regional TSPLOST.

PRESENTATION – CHRISTIAN LENTZ - Christian Lentz of the CSRA RDC, original writer of the city’s 2006 SWWURP, presented to council the 2012 Georgia Planning Award for Implementation of the SWWURP. Mayor Barnett thanked Mr. Lentz for this recognition, but stated this award should be for the work done by former Mayor Burns, Barbara Bacon and David Jenkins.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - Mayor and Council entered into a previously approved executive session at 7:14 PM for handle a personnel matter.

On motion by Harris, second by Cullars, council approved 6 to 0 re-convening in open session.

City Attorney Fleming gave report that one personnel item was discussed in executive session with no final action being taken.

On motion by Harris, second by Cullars, council approved 6 to 0 to have Mayor Barnett sign an executive session affidavit.

ADJOURNMENT: On motion by Harris, second by Armour, council approved 6 to 0 adjournment at 7:40 PM.

_____MAYOR
_____CLERK