

CITY OF WHIGHAM
COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 13, 2023

The Whigham City Council met in regular session on Tuesday, June 13, 2023 at the Whigham City Council Chambers with Mayor Trey Gainous presiding. Gainous called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. and Robert Porter opened the meeting with a prayer and led the Pledge to the Flag.

Those present were: Mayor Trey Gainous, Mayor Pro Tem Jim Sellers, Jimmie Laing, Joel Singletary, Andrew Walden, Robert Porter, Utilities Director Josh Ausburn, and City Clerk Rachel Jenson.

Agenda Adoption

A motion was made by Robert Porter to adopt the agenda. Andrew Walden seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

Minutes Adoption

A motion was made by Robert Porter to adopt the minutes from the May meeting. Joel Singletary seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

Reports

City Hall

Cemetery: The City Clerk told the Council they were contacted by John Lodge's brother, Randy Lodge, inquiring about a few lots next to Mr. John's lots that were open. The City Clerk stated that the lots were open, but they were marked "do not sell". Jenson looked back in minutes from prior years and even reached out to the former clerk to see if she knew why they were marked to not sell. The former clerk informed Jenson that there was a slight ditch between the road and the last plots, which would cause unevenness in the graves. The Utilities Director informed the Council he had gone out to measure and there was sufficient space between the end of a new grave and Ward Street's ROW, so it could be done if the Council approved. Sellers inquired if there would be any encroachment on service lines, to which Ausburn stated he did not think there would be but he would do a locate beforehand if Lodge wanted to purchase.

Jenson also let the Council know she had a phone call with Edmunds Billing on Friday for updates on the consolidation.

Utilities

Ausburn told the Council they have been swapping out more water meters and the east side of 179 is complete. Ausburn also stated that the poles at the Roundup Grounds have been set and are ready for the upgrades that the Community Club will pay a percentage of, as discussed in prior months.

City Clerk Jenson informed the Council that a recipient of an unclean lot letter had reached out to her and Ausburn about potentials for the property owned at 115 Lee Ave. The owner, Mrs. Cindy Robinson, and her husband stated that they were wanting to take down the existing house and place a mobile home in it's place. The Clerk had informed the Robinsons that the property was not zoned for mobile homes to which the Robinsons inquired what would have to be done to get a variance. Mayor Pro Tem Sellers stated that a variance would not be needed to allow the change, but a rezoning of Lee Ave could

be done. There was discussion amongst the Council that there would only be 2 properties that did not have homes on them already, which would be the 115 (after the dilapidated house is removed) and 123 Lee Ave. **A motion was made by Joel Singletary “to initiate the rezoning process on Lee Ave from McGriff St. to Larkin St. from R1 to R2”. Robert Porter seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.** The Clerk is to advertise the rezoning for the next council meeting in the paper for a public hearing. The ad must run for 2 weeks before the meeting. Jenson also told the Council copies of the budget had been placed in each of their folders and they would have to have two public hearings and then it could be adopted. Gainous told them to review and let him know if they had questions.

New Business

Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Policy for Insurance

Mayor Gainous told the Council that Joe Porter with Southern Insurance informed Clerk Jenson that a Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Policy was not in the Personnel Policy and was required to be, per the Liability Policy guidelines. A recommended document to cover the basics was provided to the Clerk, which she presented to the Council for approval. After reviewing, Sellers stated he felt that striking the term “HR Director” should be struck. The insurance company had suggested having 3 options for reporting, per the Clerk. He suggested listing the City Clerk or department head in place of HR Director. The other members agreed to list the City Clerk as a person to report to. **Jim Sellers made a motion to adopt the Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Policy presented, with the changed wording from “HR Director” to “City Clerk”, to satisfy the requirements set forth by the insurance company. Joel Singletary seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.**

MEAG Voting Delegate

Mayor Gainous told the Council MEAG reached out because we needed to update our voting delegates for the City of Whigham, as George Trulock was still listed as an alternate and Sellers as attending delegate. Mr. Jim suggested since Mr. Jimmie would be attending the MEAG meeting, he should be listed as the attending delegate, and he (Sellers) would go as alternate. There were no objections to the suggestion.

Council Matters of Interest

Joel Singletary stated he would like to get the lights and ceiling tiles in the Council Chambers repaired because the ceiling tiles were water damaged and several lights were out, causing it to be dark.

Mayor Gainous informed the Council he had gotten word that the Board of Ed had some concerns about Whigham School and the lack of access to sewer system options and he felt like the City needed to do something to help the school, including pumping the septic tank and promoting the school/honoring the teachers. The Community Council Group had been discussing what could be done, suggesting banners to be created for the teachers recognition, which they had begun designing. Gainous told the Council members the Clerk had reached out to York Engineering to get an update from GEFA to which we were told they were still reviewing applications. Ausburn stated Stillwaters had helped some other cities local to us that we could potentially reach out to since they specialize in municipalities.

Gainous asked the Council if they felt we needed to put the Capital City Bank building purchase on hold since the sewer project was important for the future of the City. Sellers stated he felt like we should proceed with bank building, as he stated it would be a good move for the City.

Gainous told the Council Assistant Fire Chief Al Akridge was still looking for a firetruck. The firetruck the Whigham VFD had been looking at had to be brought back into service due to one of their's being involved in an accident. Discussion about selling the old truck was brought up. Gainous stated they would check on options to sell the truck with Charlie.

Gainous also briefly mentioned a feasibility study would be completed in Whigham to offer better internet options. Also, the old jail cell building behind the Police Department had been inquired about to be rented out but if that was something the Council wanted to do, we would have to run an ad for bidding on the building.

Gainous brought the proposed budget up and told the Council that they had budgeted \$5,000 every year for "Parks and Recreation", but nothing had every been used for that. **Jim Sellers made a motion to to budget an account for "Parks and Recreation" and start the balance with \$5,000 to start saving for a park or recreational facility in the future. Andrew Walden seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.**

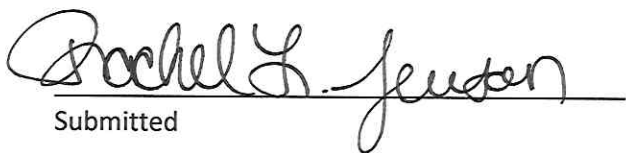
Sellers then stated he wanted to revise his motion to add: "To allow the Clerk to open an account for "Parks and Recreation" if needed at the bank." Joel Singletary seconded the revised motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

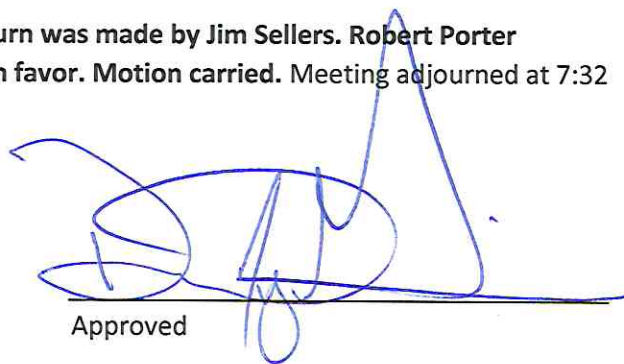
Robert Porter said he wanted the Council to know he intended to tear down the old house on his property and that most of them probably didn't even know it was there due to the tree foliage covering it.

Joel Singletary wanted to know if he could place a sign on 84 pointing to his business on Whigham-Attapulcus, as long as it wasn't on the DOT right of way. Jenson stated she would look at the ordinance.

Jim Sellers stated that he would have time to look over the zoning ordinance now that he was retired and would be willing to dedicate the time to do that since it needed to be updated. Sellers said he would make suggestions and bring them up to the Council.

With no other matters to tend to, a motion to adjourn was made by Jim Sellers. Robert Porter seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:32 PM.


Submitted


Approved