

MINUTES

City Council

Monday, May 16, 2011 – 7:00 p.m.

Call to Order: Mayor Holder welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Devotional & Pledge: Councilmember Spilliards offered the opening prayer and Mayor Holder invited everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Mayor Holder presided. Council Members: Don Bethune, Gwyn Hall, Bowen Jones, Bessie Kicklighter, Durward Motes, Judy Shuman and Jimmy Spilliards.

Staff: Brian Johnson, City Manager; Rhonda Ferrell-Bowles, Clerk of Council; James Gerard, City Attorney; Ben Brengman, IT Director; Pam Franklin, HR Director; Scott Allison, PED Director; Cory Salley, Finance Director; Cliff Ducey, Recreation Director; Benny Googe, Acting Public Works Director; David Lyons, Chief of Police and Jimmy Crosby, Fire Chief. **Absent:** Charles Draeger, Water Operations Director and Ron Feldner, Deputy City Manager.

Presentations:

Proclamation: Mayor Holder and City Manager presented to Ms. Clara Rouse a proclamation recognizing her outstanding service to the City as Finance Director.

Employee of the Quarter: Mayor Holder presented to Mr. Marketh James a certificate recognizing him as Employee of the Quarter for his service to the City in the Water Operations Department.

FY2010 Audit Report: Mr. Chris Lightle with Karp, Ronning & Tindol presented the audit report for fiscal year 2010. He said the City is in good financial shape. He said the fund balance is a little low, but the controls the City has put in place are working to build the fund balance.

Councilmember Kicklighter I would like to recognize Ms. Harriett Singleton a resident of Garden City for heading up a Pay It Forward Project in her neighborhood. She said Harriett is employed by the City as a Code Enforcement Officer, but the project was not a City sponsored project. She said Harriett did this on her own as a concerned citizen. She said a number of City employees volunteered their time on Saturday to work on the project.

Councilmember Hall said I would like to thank Ms. Singleton and the ones that volunteered on the project. He said it was not a City sponsored project. He said I hope this event challenges others to do the same in their neighborhoods.

Chief Crosby said Ms. Singleton worked to get donations for the project. He said everyone worked together without any problems. He said we painted and rebuilt the screened porch on the house. He said one person working on the project donated a new front door.

Ms. Singleton said I would like to do a project like this once a quarter.

Informal Public Comment:

Reverend Gary Monore, 46 Hawkinsville Road, said I represent the Homestead Association and we presented a workable plan to you for our community. He said I received a complaint from the Horne Family about the R.J. Hall Construction Company located next to their home. He said the construction company's fence is only two feet away from their home. He said I would like to request that this matter be looked into. He said I thought the City was cleaning off the fence facing Burnsed Blvd, because of the Beautification Project, but it has turned out to be a tragedy due the appearance of the construction company's property. He said the construction company is a real concern to the area, because their driveway is off Ansfield. He said I would like to request that Council rethink their plan on further commercializing our city. He asked what are you all planning to do as a Council to stop the commercialization on our homes. He said we have not received a response from you all on the questionnaire regarding the rebranding of our community. He said I am wondering if you all are planning on responding. He asked Council for their thoughts on the issues affecting Ms. Horne's area.

City Manager said that actually this issue was brought to staff's attention by Councilmember Bethune.

Planning Director said we have been talking with Mr. Hall and this case is scheduled to go before the Board of Appeals at their next meeting on June 14th. He said Mr. Hall does not have a permitted use. He said we will look at how close he can be with the fence.

City Manager said that the Planning Director has had several conversations with Mr. Hall about landscaping and providing vegetation for a screen.

Councilmember Kicklighter said Reverend Monore can come to the Board of Appeals meeting and voice his opinion, because the Board of Appeals makes the decision on these matters, not us.

Councilmember Bethune said the property was rezoned several years ago from industrial to commercial. He said you need to address some of your concerns to the Board of Appeals at their next meeting.

Mayor Holder said you need to get on the agenda, because we will be going to one meeting a month during the summer.

There being no further comments or questions, Mayor Holder closed the informal public comment portion of the meeting.

Formal Public Comment: Mayor Holder said we received no formal requests to address City Council.

City Council Minutes: Upon motion by Councilmember Jones, seconded by Councilmember Hall, City Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes dated 5/2/11.

Receive Staff Reports:

Finance Director presented the Finance Department's Monthly Status Report.

Water Operations Administrative Assistant presented the Water Operations Department's Monthly Status Report.

Chief of Police presented the Police Department's Monthly Status Report.

Fire Chief presented the Fire Department's Monthly Status Report.

Items for Consideration:

Ordinance, Robert Aber Rezoning: Clerk of Council read for the second reading an ordinance to amend the zoning ordinance and map of Garden City, Georgia, as amended; to rezone certain property owned by Robert Aber from its present zoning classification of "C-1" to a "C-2" zoning classification; to repeal all ordinances in conflict herewith; to provide an effective date; and for other purposes.

Councilmember Hall said the stipulations are still in place relating to the buffer.

Upon motion by Councilmember Jones, seconded by Councilmember Shuman, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the rezoning ordinance on the second reading.

Resolution, FY2011 General Fund Budget Amendment: Mayor Holder said we have for consideration a resolution to amend the FY11 General Operating Fund to adjust for the differences between the originally budgeted and presently projected revenues and expenditures for certain of the City's various budgets.

City Manager said staff is amending the budget to better reflect the revenue forecast by decreasing the revenue to what we actually received last year and decreasing the expenditures accordingly.

Upon motion by Councilmember Shuman, seconded by Councilmember Kicklighter, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the FY2011 General Fund Budget Amendment Resolution.

Resolution, FY2011 Enterprise Funds Budget Amendment: Mayor Holder said we have for consideration a resolution to amend the FY2011 budgets for the four enterprise funds; to adjust for the differences between the originally budgeted and presently projected revenues and expenses for certain of the various line items in the budgets of the four different enterprise funds.

City Manager said we are decreasing the revenues and expenditures in the enterprise funds with the exception of the fire protection fund. He said we will hold the fire protection fund flat.

Upon motion by Councilmember Shuman, seconded by Councilmember Kicklighter, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the FY2011 Enterprise Funds Budget Amendment Resolution.

Mayor Holder said during the informal public comment period of our May 2nd City Council meeting, Reverend Gary Monroe stepped forward and made several statements pertaining to the past and current Garden City financial operations. Specifically, Reverend Monroe made the following assertions:

- At one point in the recent past, the City had a Fund Balance of \$30 million.
- The City's Fund Balance has dwindled to under \$4 million.

Mayor Holder said Reverend Monroe then went on to ask for an explanation from the City Council as to this \$26 million difference.

Mayor Holder said I'm not sure where Reverend Monroe obtained his information but I feel compelled to answer so as to set the record straight. He said City staff has performed a detailed review of the pertinent financial data and I offer the following:

Garden City has never had a \$30 million dollar end-of-year fund balance. In fact, the highest end-of-year fund balance this City has ever realized was exactly \$14,379,937.00 back in 2007.

Mayor Holder said in the interest of transparency let me take this opportunity to reiterate the City's audited end-of-year fund balance for the past seven years as depicted in our Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFR):

- 2004 - \$6.5 million
- 2005 - \$7.6 million
- 2006 - \$9.6 million
- 2007 - \$14.3 million
- 2008 - \$10.7 million
- 2009 - \$9.8 million
- 2010 - \$5.7 million

Mayor Holder said the year-end figures that I have just listed are significantly different than those stated by Reverend Monroe. As for the change in the end-of-the-year fund balance amounts, it is important to note that since the 2007 sale of our old City Hall site for \$3.4 million to the Georgia Ports Authority, Garden City has made significant capital investments in the following areas:

- Garden City Town Center land acquisition of approximately 50 acres
- Garden City Town Center infrastructure improvements (roads, water/sewer, stormwater)
- Construction of a new City Hall
- Construction of a new Public Works and Water Operations facility off Bud Brown Drive

Mayor Holder said it is also important to note that during this same time period, SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Sales Tax) proceeds for the City have been significantly below the approximately \$1 million annual distribution.

Mayor Holder said the City received roughly...

- \$275,000 in 2008
- \$0 in 2009
- \$200,000 in 2010.

Mayor Holder said in closing, it is the opinion of the Mayor and City Council as well as the City's Auditor that Garden City finances have been and continue to be in good shape. Furthermore, the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) has awarded Garden City both the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award and Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting two years running and our level of savings is in line with other City governments of our size. I appreciate all the hard work and effort from our citizens, business owners, and the City staff in helping us through these difficult economic times.

Adjournment: Upon motion by Councilmember Shuman, seconded by Councilmember Hall, City Council adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Transcribed by Rhonda Ferrell-Bowles, Clerk of Council

Adopted by City Council 6-6-11