**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

**September 12, 2022**

**Edward B. Pope Conference Center**

**6:00 PM**

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Washington, Georgia, held the regular monthly meeting on Monday, September 12, 2022, at 6:02 P.M. at the Edward B. Pope Conference Center. All Council Members were present, and the City Attorney was as well.

Mayor William DeGolian presided.

Pledge of Allegiance by Councilman Andy Anderson

Invocation by Councilman Nathaniel Cullars

Approval of the Council Meeting Agenda motioned by Councilman Cullars and Seconded by Councilman Wagner. **Unanimously approved by the council members.**

Approval of minutes from the last 2 council meetings (June and August) after having revisions done to the June meeting minutes were deferred again as there seem to be discrepancies per Councilman Cullars.

**MAYOR'S ACTION TOPICS**

1. Appointment of Robyn Booker to the Mary Willis Library Board after discussion by the council members was voted unanimously to have Robyn Booker represent the City on this Board. **Vote: Passed Unanimously**

**ADMINISTRATOR TOPICS**

1. Review the Budget Preparation Timeline
2. Recommendation to adopt the millage rate
3. Recommendation to amend city Charter re: Utility Lien
4. Recommendation to approve the LOST proposal

**ADMINISTRATOR ACTION TOPICS**

1. Recommendation to adopt the millage rate: The Mayor has deemed that there will be no increase in the Millage rate or the Property taxes at this time. The City Clerk works with the County and Tax Commissioner to get this information together. This year the property tax value did go up. We need to lower the millage rate to keep no net increase and in turn, we would lose out on about $65,000. The City Clerk will have to work with the County tax commissioner to figure out how much to adjust the millage rate per the City Attorney.
2. Recommendation to amend city Charter re: Utility Lien: Deferred to the City Attorney to discuss with the Council by Administrator Jerry deBin. We discussed this last month at the council meeting to amend the city charter regarding adding Utility Lien. I do not see where there was a vote last month to adopt the amendment to the Ordinance for Utility Liens in the minutes. Jerry deBin explains that the Utility Lien is a recommendation from MEAG for customers who go into Default and do not pay their bills. We can be able to place a utility lien on their property until their bill is settled. The Charter amendment is a 3-step process and there must be advertisements run in the paper as notice to the public. Councilman Hill thinks there should be more discussion on this matter and understands the Charter amendment has already been passed. **Resolution to Amend the City Charter: Motioned by Cullars and Seconded by Mahoney. All those in Favor of Councilmen Cullars, Mahoney, Denard, Wagner, and Anderson All those Opposed Council Hill & Resolution to Amend Code of Ordinances Motioned made by Cullars Seconded by Mahoney. All those in Favor of Councilmen Cullars, Mahoney, Denard, Wagner, and Anderson All those who Opposed Councilman Hill**
3. Recommendation to approve LOST proposal: City attorney also discussed this topic on the City's behalf. The BOC was here at the last council meeting and discussed the disbursements amongst the different entities. The deadline to accept the proposal by December 31st of this year. If we do not agree with the way, it is split up we will have to go through mediation to hammer out the details. The City Administrator and the BOC are still conversing about the numbers and whether to keep them as last year. Jerry deBin states that what the County is proposing we have requested them to review their numbers again. The County has not responded at this time per Councilman Wagner. The county is resisting supplying the information that Councilman Wagner has asked for at this time. We are challenging the weighting of the formula that they use to calculate how they break down the percentages. **No Vote Taken**

**COUNCIL ACTION TOPICS**

1. Councilman Mahoney:
   1. Recommendation to place a portrait of Willie Burns and Elijah Anderson at the Washington Historical Museum: Councilman Mahoney would like to have their portraits put in the Historical Museum due to their contributions to the Community. Councilman Wagner believes it would be more proper to place Mr. Burns's portrait at City Hall as he is still alive and well at this time. As for Mr. Anderson, Councilman Wagner thinks it would be fine to add his portrait to the Historical Museum. The motion was modified to put a portrait of Mr. Burns in City Hall and Mr. Anderson’s portrait in the Historical Museum. Motion made by Councilman Mahoney and Seconded by Councilman Cullars. **Vote passed Unanimously**
   2. Recommendation to rename School St. Park to Elijah Anderson Park: Councilman Mahoney wants to celebrate our First African American elected official of the City of Washington and we have done to celebrate that in our community. The District 1 Councilmen would like to rename School St Park after Elijah Anderson who was the First African American Elected Official of Washington. Mr. Anderson owned many businesses in Washington and a bus that he used to help the community to get around. Councilman Wagner asked how long Mr. Anderson was on the council. Councilman Mahoney states he started in 1989. Mayor DeGolian asked the City Attorney what the procedure would be to make this happen. Councilmen Cullars states that the park was never officially named everyone in the community just naturally calls it School St Park due to its location. The city Administrator does collaborate with that information as well and there is no signage. City Attorney states he is currently checking our code right now to see what needs to be done if anything. A conditional Motion was made by Councilman Mahoney and Seconded by Councilman Hill. **Vote passed Unanimously**
   3. Recommendation to make marijuana under 1.0 ounce a misdemeanor: Councilman Mahoney states that we all know hemp is now legal in GA. And there is no way to distinguish the difference professionally. The issues of being arrested for this offense affect the employment, housing, and financials of those involved. Mayor DeGolian asks for more in-depth information about what Councilman Mahoney requests. Councilman Mahoney makes the point the only way to tell the difference is by evaluating the substance and that can take forever and could be inconclusive. Councilman Anderson brings to point that we as the City do not have a policing agency at this time and we would have to discuss this with the Sheriff. Councilman Mahoney says if we are going to discuss everything with the Sheriff then we should get our Police Dept back to enforce our laws. City Attorney explains that the charges would be under the discretion of the deputy writing the ticket whether the person is charged under City, State, or County law as to where the tickets will be sent for them to appear for their charges. Mayor DeGolian asked if the City currently has an Ordinance that outlaws Marijuana. City Attorney states yes under Ordinance 46-9. Councilman Wagner does not believe we should dictate laws as we are not a joint government. Councilman Mahoney does not agree and states that joint government has nothing to do with making City ordinances and that we must show that we are about change. The motion was brought by Councilman Mahoney and Seconded by Councilman Cullars. **Vote All in Favor Councilman Mahoney and Cullars, All those Opposed Councilmen, Wagner, Anderson, and Hill (Councilman Denard Sustained from Vote)**
   4. Recommendation to place speed bumps on McLendon Dr: Did not have a discussion or vote regarding the Speed Bumps at the council meeting.

Mayor and Council Members unanimously voted to go into executive session for discussion of a real estate and personal matter. **The motion was brought by Councilman Cullars and Seconded by Councilman Mahoney. Vote Unanimous**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION ACTIONS:**

1. Moton was brought by Councilman Mahoney and seconded by Councilman Hill to allow the administrator to start the bidding process to sell the Museum with any necessary reversions and at a price set after research and consultation with the Council. **Vote passed Unanimously by Council members.**
2. There was NO Action taken on the Personal Matter discussed during the Executive Session.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn for an executive session to discuss a real estate & personnel matter by unanimous vote of the Council. The executive session began at 7:25 pm and the executive session ended at 8:20 pm. Council returned from Executive Session at 8:20 pm to do the vote needed regarding the Real Estate matter. The Mayor asked for a motion to end the regular council meeting which was given by Councilman Denard and was seconded by Councilman Wagner unanimously approved to end the meeting at 8:46 pm.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

MAYOR

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

City Clerk Lesley Crawford