

**MINUTES
CALLED MEETING
THURSDAY, APRIL 5, 2018 AT 6:00 P.M.
HELD AT WALNUT GROVE MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

Present at Meeting:

Mayor Lee
Carol Witcher
Linda Pilgrim
Mark Moore
Mike Malcom
Jesse Couch

Meeting called to order by Mayor Lamar Lee. Meeting turned over to Katherine Glass, City Clerk

Katherine Glass, City Clerk – Advised everyone to follow along with the Budget for 2017 / 2018 given to them along with the agenda. This copy is of last year's budget with the changes proposed hand written on it. The Clerk just took each item one at a time and went over the changes from last year and why she and the Mayor made the changes they made. Under the income for Property Tax Derry Boyd, Walton County Tax Commissioner advised the City could expect to receive around \$170,000 so in case the entire 170,000 were not collected only \$140,000 was used for income on that line item. Some of the income line items were adjusted to less judging by what percentage is already in and how much time is left in the fiscal year. Under the Expense side under salary City Hall Staff and Hourly/Salary Public Works you will see an increase of 5%. The employees haven't had a raise in three years. A line item was added for "elections". This was entered under miscellaneous in the past. You will see a new line item number Elections with a budget of \$3,000 and 52.4000 – Street, Sidewalk, and Curb Repair with a budget of \$75,000. This will be where we will be using the property tax money collected to repair city streets that are in such bad condition. The budget was reviewed and the Clerk asked if anyone had questions.

Carol Witcher asked about 31.3200 Alcohol Beverage Tax and if we thought we would take in as much money as is projected. Carol asked why it was proposed so high. The Clerk explained it must have been brought forward from the previous year. It has been adjusted down to \$75,000. In the next three months we will continue to receive monies for sales of alcohol. Linda Pilgrim – Under salary, City Hall Staff, the pay increase is that you and Sonya and Lamar? Mayor Lee – no, just Sonya and Kathy. Kathy Glass - Then the Public Works Dept their salary is separate under 4100. Linda Pilgrim - then that is Alan, Brian and Eric? Kathy Glass – Yes. Linda - with the increase in repair and maintenance that 4901 that will help them a lot to get their equipment up to date like strobe lights on their work truck. There was further discussion about safety with the equipment and how the staff makes sure to use the equipment with the safety of citizens in mind. Linda Pilgrim – what about the library fund? There was nothing extra found that could help them out? We are still at 45,000? Kathy - That's up to the council. It could be taken out of the money to pave streets. Mayor Lee – we have been putting off too long paving and repairing streets, sidewalks too.

Carol Witcher – I want to ask about the Library. I know they want more money but by the same token do they count in any consideration, financially if nothing else? Our guys go over and they change light bulbs etc. Are they giving our workers credence for being there and doing stuff? Alan Barton– just like cutting the grass. I asked a company what would they charge to cut the Library's grass and it was between \$4,000 and \$5,000 per year just cutting the grass. Mayor Lee - We also pay all the insurance on that building, liability and everything else. We also pay the payment on the building itself every month and the Library doesn't pay any rent. Carol Witcher - I think it needs to be brought out to the public all the City does for the Library besides the \$45,000 payment. Linda Pilgrim – that was just a question. I wouldn't want to take it from out street repair. Linda Pilgrim – Speaking of Downtown Development. As I understand it, we don't have a DDA Board anymore? Mayor Lee – No. Linda Pilgrim – do we need it? Mayor Lee – If we had a down town it might would help. Carol Witcher - the thing about the DDA and I think I can speak to this because I was on the DDA. We don't have to

have a downtown but the advantage of having a DDA is having a committee that can sit down with these folks wanting to come in and start up businesses and show them what we want. If we don't have a DDA we will never grow anything. We have got to have a DDA that is active and involved with other businesses. There are so many grants we could get if we had a DDA. I really advocate for it. Linda Pilgrim – sounds like it would be helpful for us.

Carol Witcher – one of the things I have on my proposal is salary for the Mayor and Council. I think it needs to be upped. It hasn't been upped since I have been on Council. So I would like to project going to \$1,200 for each council member per year and 3,000 for the mayor per year. Carol Witcher – Mayor Lee what do you currently have, \$200.00 per month and a separate check for mileage \$50.00? This would not be effective until after the next election. By law we cannot give ourselves a raise. Mike Malcom – would that be a budgeted item? Carol Witcher and Mayor Lee – it would be in next year's budget. Maxine McClanahan – since there is always the potential for having to replace someone on council do they need to at least need council to vote on this raise now? Mike Malcom – as far as a motion to do that you would have to vote on it.

Also looking down at training and convention and I think it is vitally important for any City to educate its council. I don't think what I am proposing is out of line. We have new council members that need to go to classes. Kathy Glass – well they are taking a full load in Savannah this year. Carol Witcher – I would like them to have them be able to take classes at no expense to them. Kathy Glass – I put in \$3,000 for training. Linda Pilgrim – that is a fair amount Carol. She increased it from 1,500 to 5,000. Carol Witcher – I think if possible it should be \$10,000. I will be going off one day and so will Kevin and we need our council to be trained. We may have a Mayor that might want to go to school. Kathy Glass – So I had \$5,000 for Council and were you ok with the \$5,000 I increased for training and conventions. Carol Witcher – Yes. Kathy Glass – then next year if we need to increase it we can.

There were further discussion about equipment for Public Works and how much their line item was increased to take care of their needs.

There was discussion about whether or not the sewer system is running and if we were making any money on it. Mayor Lee explained the plant is not running at the present time but we are running the line to the new Fire/EMS Dept. Also it was explained the sewer system will have its own budget.

Carol Witcher – Do we have CD's in the bank? Kathy Glass – I only know what we have each bank account. I am not aware of any CD's and don't receive anything from any bank regarding CD's. Carol Witcher – on 52.2310 opening and closing the pavilion who does that? Lamar Lee – Brenda Lee does it on the weekend and during the week public works department does it. What is the fee for that? Kathy Glass - \$15 to open and \$15 to close. Carol Witcher – asked where we are buying our gas now. Alan Barton – We buy at EZ Stop. They have the non ethanol gas we use for small engine use. Carol Witcher – I would think we would want to buy gas in our town so the tax money would come back to us. There was discussion about the benefits of non ethanol gas on lawn mowers and small engines.

Mark Moore – 53.1100 General Supplies/Materials what is that? Kathy Glass – this includes things even the Public Works Dept uses such as toilet paper, paper towels, etc. Carol Witcher - we need new computers for the City Hall. They are old enough they need to be replaced. I would like to see that as a council we approve new computers. Mark Moore asked if ReBoot would write up a proposal for what we need at City Hall. Kathy Glass – I will get with Issac Rhodes and get a proposal.

Carol Witcher – Will we ever have another Heritage Festival? Do we need to eliminate it? Mark Moore – we are working with the Lion's Club to put together a festival. Maybe as a Council we could allow them to use the park for that time. We have a lot of volunteers to do this. I would like to see this up and going again. Kathy Glass – if you get the sponsor money you pay for a lot of your expenses. They City only had \$500.00 in the Heritage Festival.

Mark Moore – Before we get into the Library please forgive me for being late. I drove here from AL. The only thing I have a question about is the sidewalk, and curb repair. Does this include the crosswalk here at the park. I know Alan talked about the cost of the crosswalk. I think it needs to have its own entrance and come all the way up to this building. I think it is extremely important to work this into this budget. Carol – To my recollection we did not make any hard decision on that. We tabled it to talk about it later. I would prefer to have full council here before we make any decision. Alan Barton – could some of that come out of the SPLOST money? Maxine McClanahan - I asked the question about that and was told yes.

Carol Witcher -- As a Council we really need to talk to people about the SPLOST. It will be coming up for a vote. There was further discussion about the SPLOST and how much money the City of Walnut Grove might get should it be voted back in.

Mark Moore -- what did you decide about the Library? Linda Pilgrim -- I asked with all the adjustments would there be any money to put the Library back to 49,900? I was told no. Since the City does all that it does it would equate to money too. Mark Moore -- If they really wanted the money they should have brought their budget and showed us exactly where they spend their money. Carol Witcher -- After we see exactly how much money is collected we will be able to see about funding some of these areas. We don't know how much money we will actually get.

Something that occurred to me after seeing this 5% raise for the employees. Could we start looking at a benefit package that would include medical insurance, etc. Mayor Lee -- We can't do anything without money. Carol Witcher passed out her budget suggestions for everyone. She told everyone it was just some suggestions to compare with Kathy and Lamar's to see what we can do if anything. She also thanked the Mayor for allowing the Council to weigh in on the budget.

Meeting adjourned.

Approved the 10th day of May, 2018.

Lamar Lee
Mayor Lamar Lee

Katherine A. Glass
Katherine A. Glass, City Clerk