

City of White, GA

City Council Meeting

June 3, 2019

Present at the meeting were Mayor Kim Billue, Councilmember Dennis Huskins, Councilmember Tina Wilhite, Councilmember Ryan Evans, Councilmember Charles Buttrum, City Attorney Leslie Simmons and City Clerk Robin Deal.

The meeting was called to order by our Mayor Billue at 7:00 p.m. Councilmember Tina Wilhite opened the meeting with an invocation. Mayor Billue lead us in the saying of the pledge.

The minutes from the meeting of May 6th were read. Councilmember Huskins made the motion to approve the minutes and Councilmember Evans seconded the motion. Motion carried with a 4-0-0 vote.

The minutes from the meeting of May 16th were read. Councilmember Huskins made the motion to approve the minutes and Councilmember Wilhite seconded the motion. Motion carried with a 4-0-0 vote.

Reports were given by Jimmy Nichols, Chief Barnes, Robin Deal, CSX Representative Todd Allman and Billy Baker.

Jimmy Nichols reported on the water department. He stated summer leak season was upon us. The city fixed 4 leaks in the month of May. Nichols stated we have one left to fix in the subdivision that will take a little time. Jimmy stated he had not had time to check on prices on the mower but would before the next council meeting. Nichols stated that we have two lift pump stations that are approximately 14 years old and need to be serviced. Nichols stated they will check the wires in the hot head box, check the oil and check for wear. A price of \$3000 was given for the service of all 6 lift station pumps. Any parts needed would be extra. Nichols stated this was a good price and we need to get these serviced before we have a sewage spill or backup. On the trash side it is time to service the new truck. Nichols checked with Wally at R&W and they would be glad to service the truck for us to keep us from having to drive to Smyrna. No price was given. Jimmy stated that the road closed signs had been put up on Richards Rd at Hwy 411 and a dead-end sign was added to Kelly Drive. Nichols added that detour signs had been put up in front of City Hall.

Chief Barnes reported on the Police Department. Barnes started off by saying that school is out and there are lots of kids around. He reminded the citizens if they were having any issues let them know. The Dept. pulled 114 case numbers in May, issued 40 citations and several arrests were made including a drug arrest. The Chief said the Dept. had been involved in the Gordon County Domestic Violence Task Force reviewing protocol and making sure we are compliant in the way we handle domestic violence incidents. Chief Barnes stated that Officer Clanton had turned in his notice and we have

a vacancy. Barnes said he was going through applications and seeing who best fits our needs. Chief Barnes advised the council of an amendment to our No Truck Ordinance. He explained that the only change was a truck wheel and weight restriction. This change was encouraged by our judge, solicitor and in line with state laws. Mayor Billue asked the Chief if he was asking the council to amend the ordinance to contain the information about the truck wheel and weight restriction. Chief Barnes replied yes. Councilmember Huskins made a motion to amend the ordinance to include the truck weight and wheel restriction. Councilmember Evans seconded the motion. Motion passed with a 4-0-0 vote.

Robin Deal presented an annexation ordinance for the council to consider. She stated that the property owned by Theresa and Charles Patrick (Southern Classic Customs) was not in the city. Ms. Deal stated that the owners thought this property was in the city. The property is located at 3175 Hwy 411, White, GA. Councilmember Evans made a motion to approve the annexation. Councilmember Wilhite seconded the motion. Motion passes with a 4-0-0 vote.

Ms. Deal went on to remind the Mayor and Council about the upcoming election in November. Deal stated the qualifying period would be August 19-23 and packets can be picked up from her office. The fees will be \$144 for Mayor and \$36 for Councilmembers. Ms. Deal went on to say she would remind everyone again at the next council meeting.

Todd Allman spoke on behalf of CSX Railroad. He addressed the council concerning the Richards Rd Project. Allman stated he understood the city's concerns and CSX has assessed the situation including several discussions with GDOT. Mr. Allman stated that the council has a tough decision to make. He stated he was here to present what CSX would do to assist. If the City decides to close Richards Rd, CSX will issue a check to the City for \$11,000. They will remove all signal equipment at the crossing, remove the barricades, and remove the asphalt back to the right of way. Allman added that GDOT would also give the City a check in the amount of \$7,500. The GDOT funds must be used for safety purposes and the CSX funds can be used however the City sees fit. Also, Allman added they had been discussed that the crossing on W Rocky Street. He stated it was used by school buses and it was a bumpy crossing. CSX and GDOT are in negotiations to upgrade that crossing if the Richards Rd crossing is closed. The upgrade will consist of new flashing lights and gates, drainage system brand new concrete panels on the main line (unless we prefer the rubber as Allman stated some people prefer it) with tempered asphalt and on the side track, and the third track will be removed completely. The total cost of this upgrade will be about \$420,000. This expense will be covered by CSX and GDOT. Allman also mentioned another crossing that is out in the county they are also looking to upgrade on Shinall Rd but that's not part of the Richards Rd Project.

Councilmember Buttrum asked Allman how much right of way does the CSX have? Allman responded that he did not know for sure but at his best guess 25-30 feet. Buttrum continued by asking Allman if CSX was going to contribute \$400,000 to update the other crossing why would they not spend the money on the Richards Rd

crossing? Allman replied that would be an update to the crossing signal warning system and that crossing already has gates and signals. He restated that if you close Richards Rd crossing the railroad and GDOT will spend the funds to update the one on West Rocky Street. Buttrum continued with his question that if we keep Richards Rd open how much would the railroad contribute to that? Allman replied that crossing already has signals and gates on it. He continued to state that the \$420,000 would be spent on a new signal system on the crossing at W Rocky St as the current system would be entirely replaced. Allman stated there's nothing that the railroad needs to do to the crossing on Richards Rd.

A local citizen, William Watkins asked if the crossing at Richards Rd starts to deteriorate due to high traffic is the railroad responsible for repairs? Allman stated that there's nothing wrong with the rails at Richards Rd it's the approaches and the roadway. Allman continued to say that the railroad maintains the railroad crossing itself and they have looked at it. Allman stated that CSX is only required to maintain 2 feet outside the rail ties of their right of way.

City Attorney asked how long would the upgrade of the W Rocky Street crossing take? Would it be closed for a long time? Allman stated a partial closure for a day or two to redo the surface. He stated once the agreement was made with the City Council the process could be started and the upgrade would be done in stages.

At this point in the meeting the citizens started talking about other crossings in the county that needed work. Allman stated that several of them were being looked at to be upgraded by GDOT.

Councilmember Huskins stated if we went to one of our other options where we make the road a one way over the crossing with alternating signals, we still have to fix the drainage no matter what we do with it and that will be a cost anyway. He asked Allman what would you all do to help with that? Just the basic maintenance of that little area Councilmember Huskins asked? Allman replied yes that's it.

Allman went on to explain the one way with the signals would be a very expensive investment for the city. The timing of the signals would have to be tied to the railroad signals. The equipment at the Richards Rd crossing is about 35-40 years old and does not meet the standards for today. Allman continued by saying you would need lights, traffic signals, motion detectors, and all the existing equipment would have to be updated. This fact was not put into the estimate calculated by the engineer. Allman stated just the cost of the box alone would be about \$100,000. He stated by the time you get all the equipment and wiring in place to have the one way with signals it could cost the city upwards to \$800,000 - \$900,000. Allman stated in closing the council had a tough decision to make.

Councilmember Buttrum continued the conversation by asking again about what part of their right of way is CSX responsible for? Allman stated again 2 feet beyond the rail ties is what the railroad must maintain. Buttrum continued by stating the engineer at the previous council meeting stated a rough estimate of the railroad's right of way was 66 to

90 feet. Buttrum asked again about the railroad being responsible for maintaining the entire right of way. Allman stated they are not responsible for all of it just the 2 feet. Buttrum stated he could not believe that. Allman stated it's a public roadway. Buttrum again stated that the city has to come up with the money to fix CSX's problem of the drainage and the road erosion. Allman replied he wished he could help more. Buttrum added we need all the help we can get but closing Richards Rd should not be an option on the table. Buttrum added that the railroad will jump over backwards if we close a crossing. We are trying to keep it open and there's more traffic on it that people think. Buttrum stated it's good for the citizens and the crossing has been there for years and years. In his opinion we should do whatever we can to keep it open. Buttrum again stated we need to have it surveyed and see what part belongs to the railroad. He stated again that if the railroad's right of way is part of the problem they should be responsible for correcting their part and doing maintenance to keep it up. Allman stated that every town has a problem. Buttrum brought up Shinall Rd crossing again stating that is had been closed and it has since been reopened because of the complaints. Allman said again we had a tough decision to make. Buttrum again stated that the city needed help and he didn't want the citizens trying to come up with the money to fix someone else's problem. Buttrum again stated the area needed to be surveyed. He stated again that the ditch that is eroding is on CSX's property and they should come back and be willing to help. He's just one opinion and one vote. Buttrum stated he knew what he stands for. Allman stated he came to speak to give us some options. The council thanked him for coming to speak.

Billy Baker addressed the council with more information about Richards Rd. Baker explained that the engineer had a conflict of interest and could not attend tonight. Baker said he sent in a little information. When we started out we had 4 options. Fix the road up to DOT standards, one way the road whichever way, make a single lane with traffic control over the tracks with the remainder of the road of a two way or close the road. Baker said we are down to a few options. The proposal with a traffic control device is very expensive and this option was not recommended by our engineer. Baker continued by saying that the equipment would have to be maintained by the city. We would have to have an electronic electrician to keep that equipment up as it is tied to the railroad. The railroad would also have to upgrade their equipment to accommodate the new signal system. Baker stated that the equipment could costs 50-60 thousand dollars. He said it was a good idea if this was a straight road, but the railroad is involved and that makes it not a good option for us. One other option is to make it up to DOT standards with 12-foot lanes and that is an expensive option. The council is down to two options. One way it; whichever way you chose or close the road. Baker said even with the one way we are still going to have to spend some money. But you won't have to do as much because you have 18-feet of lane to work with. Baker continued by stating we still have to deal with the drainage and to put a new pipe under the road is \$42,000. Guard rails would cost an additional \$5,200. This does not include the engineering design to do all the work and the costs of having a railroad representative on the job site while the work is being done. We are still talking about a \$200-\$250 thousand-dollar project; even with the \$7000 from GDOT and \$11000 from the railroad if we close the crossing. Baker stated we need a detailed design from the engineer to show the one way no matter which way it goes at a cost of about \$40,000. Baker stated that the initial proposal of

\$500,000 and narrow it down once you guys decide which way you want to go. It is still going to be an expensive project and it's going to take some time. Baker stated he and the Mayor would be meeting with Bartow County officials to review some long-range plans that were made in 2016 and see if the Richards Rd upgrade was still in the plan.

Councilmember Buttrum asked Baker did you say \$40,000 to replace the pipes on both sides? Baker stated their estimate was \$42,000. Buttrum stated that price sounds reasonable and that's what got us started on this project was getting the water off of Terry over there. Baker continued by saying we are going to have to get some surveying done and get a working elevation; a field survey as a starter to see where we are at. Buttrum asked the Mayor do you all have water over there. Buttrum stated this should be a starting point. Baker said we have to get with FEMA, DOT, and the railroad. We need to decide which way we want to go and say here's the drawings. We need to have a specific plan. Baker said we could go to Bartow County and say this is the way we think we can solve this Richards Rd problem. Here's a set of drawings and this is what the estimate is, and we need some help. Or we can get with their grants person to see if we can get help. Baker said we just have to get it on paper and tell them what the city wants.

Councilmember Huskins stated that the Roger Cox guy stated something about triple E to check with them to about matching funds. Mayor Billue responded by saying that's the only one so far that we have been able to get money from all the others were a no go. Baker stated he was hoping to get more out of the railroad stating he thinks we need to negotiate some more. Councilmember Huskins stated that they guy from the railroad didn't know the right of way like Charles was saying. Buttrum stated that the railroad is always up for closing a crossing and would come up with \$400,000 to update this one but that's an excuse to close this one. Baker continued by saying that we could have it surveyed. According to pass history one of the pipes is on the railroad's property and one is not. Buttrum stated the engineer stated they had 66 to 90 feet and if we can get it surveyed we will know which part the city is responsibility. Buttrum continued by saying right not with out it being surveyed we don't know whose property is whose. Huskins stated it should be public record and any CSX web site should be able to tell you how much they have as a right of way. Baker, Buttrum and Huskins continued talking about the right of way, where it started, and how we could find out. Baker changed subjects by talking about the water lines under the Cass/White Road project. Stating the right of was there was 75 ft as reported by Allman. Baker stated he thinks the Mayor and Council decide which way they want to go but it is still going to cost us a little money. Baker stated that we don't have to get started tomorrow but we do have to play the grant role which is a slow process. Baker stated we could even look into GIFA and use SPLOST funds to pay it back.

Councilmember Huskins stated he was thinking like Charles he liked the one way. Councilmember Buttrum stated he wants the survey done. All members agreed they are not ready to decide. Buttrum stated again you can't go to the bargaining table without knowing about the right of way. Baker said there was a line item for a field survey that should do what Buttrum was talking about. Councilmember Buttrum stated again that we needed the survey and to put some pins in the area, so we know where the right of

way is. Baker stated again we needed a field survey that included the drainage part and show everyone's property. Buttrum restated that he could not believe that a representative from CSX did not know the amount of right of way the railroad had. Baker says we need to push the railroad we need to get them to spend the \$400,000 on the W Rocky St crossing. Councilmember Evans made a motion to approve the field survey for the Richards Rd Project. Councilmember Buttrum seconded the motion. Motion passed with a 4-0-0 vote.

Mayor Billue asked the council if they had a chance to read over the materials discussing Code Red. Councilmember Huskins stated he did; and he thought we had enough systems to warn us. He asked if it was an app. Mayor Billue stated it was an app that a citizen has asked us to look into and it was a way to get a mass message out to everyone, but you would have to sign up for it. Huskins stated again that we had enough systems. Evans stated that you had to worry about who was going to download it.

Mayor Billue asked if the council had reviewed the proposed pay scale. Councilmember Huskins made a motion to approve the proposed pay scale. Councilmember Wilhite seconded the motion. Motion passed with a 4-0-0 vote.


Mayor Billue asked if the council had a chance to look over the movie ordinance. Huskins stated that the ordinance was really detailed; and he liked it. Councilmember Huskins made a motion to approve the Movie Ordinance. Councilmember Evans seconded the motion. Motion passed with a 4-0-0 vote.

Councilmember Evans asked to address the council on renaming the club house in memory of Clayton Collins. Collins took care of the club house for years and he wanted the council's input. Buttrum stated it would be a good idea. Huskins stated it was no longer under the care of the Kiwanis Club. Evans stated he wanted to rename it the Clayton Collins Community Clubhouse. Buttrum stated that was fine with him. Huskins stated after the Kiwanis gave it up Clayton was always doing things and having events over there. Huskins asked when you get the pushback from those folks we hope you have your answers ready. Evans stated he was ready. Councilmember Evans made the motion to rename the club house the Clayton Collins Community Clubhouse. Councilmember Buttrum seconded the motion. Motion passed with a 4-0-0 vote.

Councilmember Huskins made a motion to end the meeting. Councilmember Buttrum seconded the motion. Motion carried with a 4-0-0 vote.

The meeting ended at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Robin Deal
City Clerk

