

City of White Georgia  
Council Meeting Minutes  
April 1, 2024

Present at the meeting were Mayor Curtis Powell, Council members, Jean Swank, Karissa Noland, Stephanie Nicholson, and Gary Crisp, City Attorney, Elliot Noll and City Clerk, Robin Cochran. Mayor Powell called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and began with the pledge of allegiance. Council member Nicholson lead the invocation.

Mayor Powell started with the approval of the agenda for the meeting asking to add the resolution to declare Georgia Cities Week beginning April 21<sup>st</sup> through the 27<sup>th</sup> to the agenda under new business. Mayor Powell asked for a motion to approve. Council member Nicholson made the motion to add it to the agenda. Council member Crisp seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Mayor Powell continued by asking to put the maturing CDs (Certificate of Deposit) on the agenda. Council member Nicholson made the motion to add it to the agenda under new business. Council member Crisp asked for clarification on what they were voting on. Mayor Powell reminds the council that there are two CDs that are maturing on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April and asked the council what they want to do with the CDs, for example, letting the CDs roll over, do they want to move them, etc. Mayor Powell asked for a second motion to approve. Councilmember Swank seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Mayor Powell moved to the approval of the March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024, minutes and opened the floor for discussion. Hearing none, Mayor Powell asked for a motion to approve. Council member Nicholson made a motion to approve. Council member Crisp seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Mayor Powell opened the floor for public comments. None were made and the public comments portion of the meeting were closed.

Mrs. Cochran approached the council to give her report. Cochran started by reminding everyone about Council member Swank's event, The Senior Social, starting April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, from 1:30-3:30 in the Reception Hall. Cochran asked the citizens for plastic egg donations on behalf of Council

member Nicholson, as she plans to host a huge Easter Egg hunt next year for all the citizens and their children next year. Cochran updated the council on the water billing process for the previous month and what her plans were for the following month to come. Cochran reminded everyone that you don't need your bill to come in the mail to pay it, you can always call or come to city hall during normal business hours to find out how much your bill is and to pay it. Cochran then explained what Georgia Cities week entails. Part of this is the city's Spring Spruce Up Contest which Cochran stated the interested citizens needed to be signed up by the 17<sup>th</sup> and the winners would be announced on the 26<sup>th</sup>, during a cookout for the community. Cochran finished up her report by announcing that her assistant, Brianna Shuping, passed her mandated training and was now being promoted to Deputy City Clerk. Council member Nicholson gives her thanks to Cochran and Shuping for handling the mailing fiasco as well as they did and apologized on behalf of everyone who may not have been as understanding as others.

Police Chief Jason Smith stated he had nothing to report and asked the council if they had any questions for him. Council member Nicholson gave thanks to Smith and his department for all they do for the community and the city.

Mayor Powell moved to unfinished business. The tree removal at the Public Work building. Powell opened the floor for council discussion. Council member Nicholson stated that although she was excited about the tree carving, after speaking with multiple tree people who she got to speak with quite a bit, she knew that if there are bees living in there, the tree is hallowed out and that the limbs would not be salvageable. Nicholson stated they thought about the safety of everyone when considering carving this tree and gave an alternate idea of planting a tree in the park to carve as she does love this idea a lot. Council member Swank agrees with Nicholson stating that everyone who she had talked to about the tree is saying the same thing to her; it's dead, cut it down and that she'd like to plant a tree in the park for more shade. Mayor Powell states that if there ended up being any useable trunk off the tree, they could get someone to build a bench out of the good wood off the tree and asked the council if they'd be opposed to that. Council member Crisp stated that that would be easy to accomplish. Crisp mentioned he spoke with a gentleman at Woodpeckers and they gave the best quote and the gentleman he spoke with agreed to bring his bucket truck the night before and would work with the bee keeper to help save the

bees. Powell states that Tony Ross, who would be doing the bee removal, looked at where the bees were and said he would be happy to work with the city to take care of the bees that are in the tree. Mayor Powell asked for a motion. Council member Crisp made a motion to accept Woodpeckers to take the tree down. Powell asked about the donations for using the salvageable wood to make a bench. Council member Crisp stated that water department employee, Anthony Morris, knew someone who was willing to haul the wood off for firewood. Crisp continued by saying that they could keep the bigger limbs and reach out to Huskins' Sawmill and have him chop it up for the city and generously offered to pay for it himself. Mayor Powell asked for a second motion. Council member Noland seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Mayor Powell moved to the Certificate of Deposits that was tabled at last month's meeting. Powell states they have found better interest rates for the CD and asked Cochran to speak on it. Cochran stated that for 7 months they could get a 4.46% interest rate and 12 months would be a 4% interest rate when looking at the banks the city currently used as they typically give the best rates. Councilmember Crisp stated that the banks he has looked into offered interest rates of over 5%. Cochran reminded the council that a government rate is different than an individual rate and that Truist had the best rate. Mayor Powell asked for a motion. Council member Noland made the motion to accept the 4.46% interest rate for 7 months. Council member Crisp seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Water Superintendent Jimmy Nichols approached the council. Nichols referred to the lawnmower quotes he presented to Mayor Powell. A John Deer Mower for \$11,750 from Ag-Pro, Tiger Cat for \$10,894, and a Lasar for \$10,479. Council member Swank made sure they were comparable mowers. Nichols stated they were all great zero turn mowers with a 60-inch deck, but that he'd want to go with the John Deer mower since they've had their current John Deer mower for 10 years, and the one before that they had for about 8 years insisting, they were great mowers. Swank asked how the other mowers were rated compared to the John Deer mower. Nichols stated that Kubota mower is the best based off his many years of mowing, but John Deer is number 2. Council member Crisp asked Nichols if he got a quote from Kubota. He did not, he just got the three quotes presented. There was chatter amongst the council. Council member Nicholson suggested buying the John Deer mower from Ag-Pro as the city has a long relationship history with this company. Nichols continues by saying they

will need to buy the mower as soon as possible. Mayor Powell asked for a motion to approve the purchase of a new John Deere mower from Ag-Pro. Council member Nicholson asked if SPLOST money would be used. Powell informed her that they budgeted for equipment, it would not be coming from SPLOST. Council member Nicholson made a motion to approve. Council member Noland seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Mayor Powell moved to the surplus of the current John Deere mower. Nichols said they would make a list of their surplus items. Powell told Nichols to make a list of the surplus items and to have it ready at the May council meeting. There was chatter amongst the council and citizens, William Watkins and Tim Nicholson. Council member Nicholson made the motion to surplus the old John Deere mower and to revisit the rest of the surplus list next month when Nichols has his full list readily available. Council member Noland seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Nichols asked the council to consider letting him hire a part time worker for Tuesdays and Wednesdays for the trash route as trash pick-up days are getting considerably more and more dangerous with passing vehicles speeding around the trash truck while his crew is getting off and on the back of the truck. Nichols asked that the part time helper drive behind the truck with flashers on for two or three hours on both Tuesdays and Wednesdays because he has great concern about one of his workers being hit by a car. Mayor Powell opened the floor for discussion. Council member Nicholson suggested having Public Works and Water Department employees, Anthony Morris or William Paterson, drive behind them in a work truck to do that and get community service workers to help with trash. Powell stated what the requirements were to be a follow vehicle. Powell recommended getting more information and coming back to the topic. Nichols asked the council for a raise for the employees. Council member Crisp stated that raises were already on the agenda for the meeting. Nichols stated that everyone deserved more than a \$.20 raise. Crisp stated that the amount was up to the council members, but that it was going to be discussed this night.

Powell gave the floor to City Clerk Robin Cochran. Cochran stated that she and Mayor Powell got a proposal from TextMyGov. This agency allows the city to send out mass text messages to inform citizens of all news pertinent to them. The contract is set up for 20,000 texts a year with a three-year contract. Powell agreed with Cochran about how great he believes this will

be for the community and city. Cochran boasts about the mapping feature included with this offer where the city can draw a circle on a map in the app and the text would be sent to anyone affected in that area as to not waste any text messages when the city sends alerts to citizens unaffected. Council member Swank asked what the procedure was if they went over 20,000 text messages. Cochran informs her of the breakdown included in the proposal. Swank asked if they looked at any other tools. Powell stated he did look at a few others, but this one is the easiest to use and the cheapest. Council member Noland asked if the company would consider letting them do a trial period before signing the three-year contract. Powell said they could reach out to Brad (the agent he and Cochran have been working with) and see about a trial period before committing to a three-year contract. Mayor Powell asked for a motion to be tabled until next month. Council member Nicholson made the motion to table until some kinks were worked out. Council member Crisp seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Mayor Powell moved to city employee raises. Powell stated a 3% raise for all employees falls within the budget. Powell opens the floor for discussion amongst the council. Council member Crisp stated he was under the impression the city employees all got a 3% raise last year and that had not happened at this point in time and stated after he talked with Cochran, she told Crisp the council voted it down. Cochran reminded the council that the raises were not a topic of discussion this year yet, and the employees got a raise last July. Crisp states that he would like to give the employees a 5% raise as he feels like 3% is not enough in today's economy. Swank recommends going into executive session to continue the conversation amongst the council. Powell reminds the council that the city must have a balanced budget but that he agrees about going into executive session to talk about it further. Powell asks for a motion to go into executive session. Council member Crisp made a motion to go into executive session to discuss payroll. Council member Swank seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Mayor Powell and council come back from the executive session. Powell stated no votes were taken in the executive session and opened the council meeting again starting with city employee raises. Powell asked for a motion. Council member Swank made a motion to approve a 3% raise for all employees. Council member Crisp seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Powell moved to Georgia cities week. Opened the floor to the council for discussion. Hearing none, Powell asked for a motion. Council member Nichelson made a motion to participate in Georgia Cities Week including all the events Cochran mentioned, The Spring Spruce Up and the Cookout. Council member Swank seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Mayor Powell moved to new business. Powell opened the floor to the council for discussion on the Certificate of Deposits. Council member Nichelson suggested looking at the banks the city currently uses, maybe reach out to a couple more just in case there are better rates before a decision is made. Powell asked if they wanted to take out the CDs before looking around at other rates or letting it mature. Nichelson stated she would want it taken out until they find better rates. Powell asked for a motion. Council member Nichelson made a motion to take the CDs out to look for better rates. Council member Noland seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Mayor Powell moved to Mayor and Council comments. Powell stated he does not have anything further he would like to discuss. The council members did not have anything further to discuss either. Powell asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council member Crisp made the motion to adjourn. Council member Swank seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

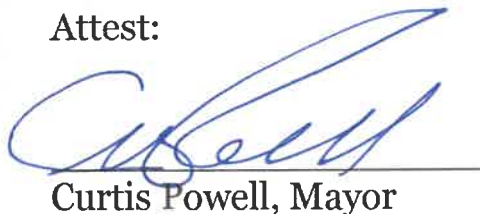
Meeting Adjourned at 8:15pm.

Regards,



Robin Cochran

Attest:



Curtis Powell, Mayor