

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF AUSTELL
MONDAY, JULY 11, 2016**

Present: Mayor Joe Jerkins
Kirsten Anderson
Valerie Anderson
Ollie Clemons
Randy Green
Sandra Leverette
Scott Thomas

The regular meeting of the Mayor and Council was held on Monday, July 11, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. at City Hall

Also present were: Scott Kimbrough, City Attorney; Sandra Farmer, City Clerk; Elizabeth Young, Assistant Director; General Administration; Randy Bowens, Public Works Director; Jim Graham, Community Affairs Director; Pat Maxwell, Fire Chief; and Bob Starrett, Police Chief.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Jerkins called the meeting to order and Reverend Cindy Conner gave the Invocation and Mayor Jerkins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Jerkins asked if anyone had any Items to add to the Agenda. Ms. Valerie Anderson stated she would like to add 13B. – 6 Month Moratorium. Mr. Ollie Clemons stated he would like to add 9D. – Work Permit Approval.

Mr. Clemons moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Jerkins to approve items added to the Agenda. Seconded by Mr. Thomas. Motion passed (6-0)

2. CONSENT AGENDA – INFORMATION AND UPDATE

(No Action Required by Council – See Specific Department Director before the Meeting.)

3. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve Bills
- B. Approve Legal Bills \$3,340.50
- C. Approve Minutes of Regular Council Meeting June 6, 2016

Mr. Thomas moved to follow the recommendation to approve the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Ms. Valerie Anderson. Motion passed (6-0).

4. EXCEPTION TO CONSENT AGENDA

5. CITIZENS REPORT

Mayor Jerkins asked if anyone would like to speak to the Mayor and Council.

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Mr. Luke Lanta stated his name and stated he was a candidate for Cobb County State Court judicial vacancy. I wanted to thank everyone for the kindness and support from the citizens of Austell. I just wanted to say thank you from the bottom of my heart. I look forward to working with the leaders and the residents of Austell to assure that Cobb County continues to be a safe place to raise a family and an excellent place to do business.

Mr. Levi Wilson stated his name and stated he comes to the meeting again to speak on behalf of the Austell Community Cemetery. I would like to ask the City Council and the Mayor once again if they can help with the maintenance of the cemetery. Has the Mayor and Council come up with any type of solutions? Mayor Jerkins stated he has thought about this and I have come up with a suggestion even though it is not in the City limits of Austell. What I thought we can do is donate some money from the railroad interest fund and we may have to cut the churches short and we usually give them fifteen hundred dollars to twenty-three or twenty-four churches every year. We may have to cut them back to a thousand dollars instead of fifteen hundred dollars. I don't exactly know how much we will have this year from the interest. I figured maybe about three thousand dollars if we have it. You can probably get someone to cut the grass for four or five hundred dollars each time right or wrong. If we give three thousand a year and we only meet one time a year and then the Council votes. Then they can do the same thing for the other cemetery and give about twelve thousand to take care of it to Randy Bowens, department if he wants to take care of it. Also, if he wants to bid it out instead of the City doing it. We could do it that way because it is at least four times bigger than the cemetery you are talking about. I would like to say whatever the City donates is very much appreciated. Mayor Jerkins stated it will not involve taxpayer monies and we will donate even though it is outside of the City limits. Mayor Jerkins stated we need to be able to write a check to someone and see that is it is done. The A.A.C.I.C. Committee doesn't meet until around October so we could not give you money until then. The only problem after they meet the Council will have to vote on this. Mayor Jerkins asked the Council if this was o.k. with them and they all replied yes, it would be o.k. We can give the money this year but it would be in November. Mayor Jerkins asked Mr. Wilson if this be o.k. Mr. Wilson stated that sounds wonderful and the check would be made out to Austell Community Cemetery. Mayor Jerkins stated either way we will need someone to make the check out to. Mayor Jerkins asked Mr. Wilson if they had an account for the cemetery. Mr. Wilson stated, yes we do. Mayor Jerkins stated the City has an account where someone donates eleven hundred dollars a year to Rosehill Cemetery. They have been doing this for years to keep the grass cut. Mr. Wilson thanked the Mayor and Council again. Mr. Wilson stated we normally have to cut the grass from March through November.

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Mayor Jerkins stated that is about seven months so if you could get it cut for four hundred dollars you would have plenty of money. We will work on this but like I said it may be November before we can get the money to you. Mr. Wilson thanked the Mayor and stated he appreciated everything.

Mayor Jerkins asked if anyone else would like to speak to the Mayor and Council. No one else spoke. Mayor Jerkins stated Mr. Jim Graham has an award he would like to give away tonight from the CMA meeting in Savannah.

Mr. Jim Graham stated down at the Georgia Municipal Association in Savannah, Georgia we had several Council members attend. Darrell Weaver my Assistant and I and my wife attended. Although my wife and I had to leave on Sunday. This race took place on Monday morning. Ms. Valerie Anderson, Ms. Kirsten Anderson, Mr. Ollie Clemons and Darrell Weaver and all their families participated in the road race. The City of Austell won second place in all of the State of Georgia. I would like to present this trophy to the Mayor Jerkins to be placed at City Hall for all to see. I don't think we had anyone ambulatory after the race. It is a great accomplishment and we all had a good productive time. I would like to thank everyone for participating.

Mayor Jerkins stated he would like to thank each and every one of you for attending the GMA Conference in Savannah, GA.

Mr. Scott Kimbrough, City Attorney stated he would like call for a Public Hearing on the 20-year Comprehensive Plan update.

Mr. Daniel B. Dobry Jr. of Croy Engineering introduced himself. Mr. Kimbrough swore in Mr. Dobry. Mr. Dobry explained the City of Austell is required to have an updated Comprehensive Plan. The last one completed was through 2017. We are going through the process now so the next one will be the 20 year Comprehensive Plan. There are certain requirements for the process and one is the Public Hearing at the initiation of the study. We will be coming back in late fall for the second Public Hearing to present the plan with the information we get from the citizens to help formulate the policies and procedures for a long range vision and short-term work program for five years and we will have specific activities for the departments and staff who will undertake. This will be the input that we receive from the citizens. I will do a brief presentation and it is only about twelve slides and I will run through them pretty quick. Anyone who would like to comment we would love to hear what you have to say. Mr. Dobry presented all twelve slides. Mr. Dobry stated we do not want to reinvent the wheel we just want to build on what we already have.

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The point of the plan runs from 2007 – 2027 and every ten years there is a major update and this is where we are now. The work program expires this year. The City qualifies for State funding by having the qualified local government status. There are various components and they are all interconnected. The slides just really touch some of the statistics from the census data that has been updated. If anyone here would like a copy of the slides and the plan please get with me and I will get you the contact information. We will provide you with whatever we have. It is your City and your plan and whatever we do it's yours. We have a lot of background information on the City of Austell. We would like to know what the citizens think and we will welcome your ideas. Share with us your ideas so that we can put together a work program that makes things better for you, your family or if you are a business owner and for all the stakeholders in the City of Austell. With that I will finish with the presentation and we have the boards outside and we are asking for your input. We will be here after the meeting if you would like to spend some time with us and this concludes the Public Hearing. Mr. Kimbrough asked if anyone had any concerns or comments.

Mr. Derick Caffé in the audience asked if he wanted to get information on the Comprehensive Plan and gave his comments would he hear from anyone again and how does it go. Mr. Dobry stated what we are doing doesn't stop and start. The opportunity to let us know and there is the online survey you can do. It is important to get ideas outside and the number one thing about Austell is the small town atmosphere. To keep you in touch and to send e-mails is no problem and we will be glad to do it. We need your contact information and we will keep you informed of what happening. Also, the web page will be updated where we will be in the community. We will make every effort to keep you involved. Mr. Caffé asked Mr. Dobry exactly what is your responsibility in the plan? Mr. Dobry stated we will actually put the document together. I have a lot of respect for the folks that work for the City of Austell. Their day to day activities keep them very busy. They are always meeting with citizens and always has a next thing to do. We actually put the graphs together and take all of the data collected and put into the plan. It has to be submitted to the State and the ARC for review. Our role is to act like the staff or an extension of the staff and let them do what they have been hired to do and we take the plan and put it all together. I hope that answered your question. Mr. Kimbrough asked Mr. Dobry who is the best person in the City to get in touch with? Mr. Dobry stated it would be Darrell Weaver who is the Zoning Administrator. Mr. Dobry stated we have on the table in the lobby what we call a fact sheet for everyone. The fact sheet has Darrell's information as well as mine on the fact sheet. Whatever is a particular interest to you and where you think the City should be in the future please let us know. Mr. Caffé stated so you are like a liaison for the City of Austell and the community. Mr. Dobry stated, yes, we can step back and work with the data and arrange and work with the community.

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We are sort of an extension of staff to do this work. Mr. Kimbrough asked if there are any other questions or comments. Mr. Alvin Poole stated his name and asked if Mr. Weaver was the person to move the plan forward. Mr. Dobry stated that is a great question. Mr. Weaver will have the ultimate responsibility because in five years to report the City accomplishments and their work plan. The way the work plan is setup each department will have data from the citizens and they will have projects to take on. So it will be distributed among the staff for their areas for different responsibilities. Mr. Darrell Weaver will be the main contact to check the list and see what has been done. There is accountability with the plan through the work program. Mr. Caffee asked where he could find the plan. Mr. Dobry stated right as a draft document it does exist. We have really just started the process and with the interviews with the Mayor and the Council Members and with our first stake holder commitment meeting which will be Wednesday, July 27, 2016. We have a group of community leaders who have volunteered to help with this process. When we put the document together we will have paper copies that will be available on the website. So again, we want it to be as easy as possible for you to get information. Mr. Caffee asked what the timeline was on this. Mr. Dobry stated it is our intention to have the draft plan done before Thanksgiving. Because, we don't want to worry about the plan during the holiday season. It is a lot of projects for the City to take on. Cobb County is doing their Comprehensive Plan right now and it will take them about a year and a half to get through everything before they have a plan. We are probably going to have a second look at the plan before Thanksgiving. Ms. Trudie Causey asked once these plans are made can the City go back and change the plans. Mr. Dobry stated yes, its dynamic and it is a continuous process. This is what we are doing right now. The short term work program that was with the last plan is being updated. Always with good intentions but you can run into obstacles whether its environmental issues which stopped the project are maybe a funding issue. This is the time where the current work program is being updated and the new one will be in place but it does change. Will the whole thing change, no which is why we need your input to do the things that need to be done. Mr. Caffee stated the plan is 2007 to 2017 so we are in the middle of the plan correct? I am guessing there was a plan in 2007. So, how was that plan meant to revitalize the downtown area and do you have any specifics of what was put in place back in 2007. Mr. Dobry stated he was sorry, but he did not have that information. Mr. Caffee stated he would like to make a suggestion. Since I have moved into the community I have noticed there is no anchor in downtown Austell. If you have seen other cities they always have like a anchor like a Wal-Mart or something to attract the residents and bring in the traffic for the other local stores. In downtown Austell there is no anchor. I know they have made suggestions as far as a restaurant but I don't know any particular restaurant that would have that type of draw to bring in people to this area. Typically what you have is local government which is services that people have to use.

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If you want a business license you have to go through the government. So you typically have government offices in the downtown area. These services would bring people to this downtown area and you could build off that natural traffic. One thing I would like to learn more about is to vitalize the downtown area. I really think we will need an anchor to support the downtown area and it needs to be more than a restaurant. Mr. Jim Graham stated we are working right now and I am not at liberty to say what we have on the drawing board right now. This time next year you will see the anchors in downtown Austell. We are actively pursuing this with the Mayor and Council with the direction we started in February of this year. We are going forward faster than I can keep up with. We have developers in downtown and we met with one today as a matter of fact. This time next year you will see a lot more happening downtown and we are hoping it will grow from there. We know what the vision is and we are trying to get there. We will put the information on the website as soon as people make the commitments. I do know you own some property downtown. Mr. Caffè stated yes he did in the area. If our plan works out you will have a good investment. Mr. Caffè stated he wished Mr. Graham well in his efforts. Mr. Graham stated we do have one commitment on a restaurant and another which is a franchise who we are talking to. One restaurant we are talking to is in West Cobb and they did about two million dollars last year and their food is great. You can get just about anything you would like to eat there. I feel you will see a really stable restaurant downtown. We have been dreaming this would happen in downtown. Mr. Weaver and I have been working very hard speaking with the developers and we hope to continue working with the developers and to get a plan of action. I think you are going to see things happening right away and Mr. Bowens is working with us and you are going to see construction going on as well. I would love to tell you more but until we can get a commitment I just can't right now. Just be patient with us and you will see what happens in the near future. Mr. Caffè asked what we can do as citizens to help the process along. Mr. Graham stated you could come down there and do some labor work for us. Mr. Graham stated we are trying to sell Austell and this is what we are trying to do. Mr. Darrell Weaver stated it is data driven we need as many people to participate so we can move this forward. Spread the word and talk to your neighbors and if you have a Homeowners Association and if you need someone to come out we will be glad to do that. Be a part of this because it cannot be a small group of people. We need to get as many people involved in the process. If someone is against something it is easy to come out and voice their complaint. We need people to come out and voice their opinions because this will affect us the next fifteen or twenty years. Ms. Anderson stated she had a question pertaining to what can you do as citizens. One of the biggest things we can do now is patronize the local businesses we have right now. Because if we do have the best businesses here and they are not making money they will leave this area. We all need to know what restaurants are in the Austell area and also what buffets they are serving.

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They only do it once or twice a week and I think it is only six dollars. Visit those places and spend our money there. The businesses we do have can stay open and the other businesses will see they are flourishing and think they may look into that. Mr. Kimbrough asked if anyone else had any questions. No one had any questions. Mr. Kimbrough stated we need a motion to close the Public Hearing.

Mr. Clemons moved to follow the recommendation of Mr. Kimbrough to close the Public Hearing. Seconded by Ms. Leverette. Motion passed (6-0).

**6. GAS SYSTEM REPRESENTATIVE
JOE JERKINS**

Mr. Kimbrough stated he and Mr. Clemons attended the meeting and also present was Council Member Ms. Valerie Anderson. Mr. Kimbrough stated normal items took place adopting the gas rate applicable for this billing period. With the weather like it is gas prices actually dropped a little bit and very flat as it has been all of this year with the warm weather like it has been. I think I mentioned in the Pre-Agenda meeting they did a mock catastrophe with GEMA and Austell Gas and Douglas County Fire and Medics. They staged a tanker accident that hit a gas line and the authorities were there to take notes and see how everyone was doing. Austell Gas and their crew passed with flying colors. They are doing a good job in training everyone in those types of things as well as conducting their day-to-day business.

A. Appointments – Austell Natural Gas System Board of Directors

Mayor Jerkins stated we have three appointments. One of them is Robert McField and this is a new appointment and it is for a year which will be July 31, 2017. Jean Floyd is moving so Mr. McField will take her place for one year. We have Ann Collins and her term is for 2 years which is July 31, 2018. Mr. Alvin Poole will serve and his term expires July 31, 2018.

Ms. Kirsten Anderson moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Jerkins to approve the Appointments for Austell Natural Gas System Board of Directors. Seconded by Mr. Clemons. Motion passed (6-0).

**7. FINANCE DEPARTMENT
OLLIE CLEMONS, CHAIRPERSON
Denise Soesbee, Director**

A. Financial Report

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**8. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION
SANDRA LEVERETTE, CHAIRPERSON
Sandy Farmer, Director**

- A. No Report

**9. POLICE DEPARTMENT
OLLIE CLEMONS, CHAIRPERSON
Bob Starrett, Police Chief**

- A. Police Report
B. Code Enforcement Report
C. Lazer Purchase

Mr. Clemons stated the Police Committee requests Council to approve the purchase of Laser Units from Stalker Radar in the amount of \$15,710.00. The bids were for six units. Stalker Radar is the middle bid, but they are giving us two additional units at no cost. The bids are attached. The money for this purchase will be taken from the 2011 SPLOST.

Mr. Clemons moved to follow the recommendation of the Police Committee to approve the Lazer Purchase. Seconded by Mr. Thomas. Motion passed (6-0).

**10. FIRE DEPARTMENT
RANDY GREEN, CHAIRPERSON
Pat Maxwell, Fire Chief**

- A. Fire Report

**11. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
CHAIRPERSON
Jim Graham, Director**

- A. No Report

12. PARKS DEPARTMENT
SCOTT THOMAS, CHAIRPERSON

- A. No Report

13. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
VALERIE ANDERSON, CHAIRPERSON
Jim Graham, Director

- A. Planning and Zoning Board Appointment
- B. Board of Zoning Appeal/Variance Board Appointment
- C. Façade Grant Review Committee
- D. Six Month Moratorium

14. ATTORNEY, DUPREE & KIMBROUGH

- A. Ordinance Amendment Sec. 2.41 of the Charter of the City of Austell to change the percentage of gross revenue from Austell Gas System who pays the City of Austell. 2nd Public Hearing.
- B. Greystone Power Corporation – Franchise Agreement

15. MAYOR'S REPORT

16. ADJOURN