

**CITY OF METTER
CALLED MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 2017
5:30 P.M.**

A called meeting was held at City Hall on Monday, August 28, 2017, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Attending the hearing were the following officials:

Mayor Billy Trapnell
Councilwoman Marsha Colson
Councilwoman Chyrileen Kilcrease
Councilman Gregory Thomas
City Manager Mandi Cody
City Clerk Angie Conner
Finance Manager Cindy Collins
HR/Purchasing Manager Missy Edenfield
Public Works Director Cliff Hendrix
Police Chief Mack Seckinger
Captain Robert Shore
Welcome Center/Chamber Manager Victoria Gaiffen
Cary Snell, Metter Advertiser
Ed Boyd – Mayor Elect

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Mayor Trapnell called the hearing to order and welcomed everyone.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilwoman Kilcrease led the Pledge of Allegiance.

INVOCATION

Councilman Thomas gave the invocation.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Councilwoman Colson seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 2017 Special Election

Councilman Thomas made a motion to approve a resolution to provide for the Call of the 2017 Special Election for the City of Metter, Georgia; to provide for the qualifying fees and dates and times to qualify for City Council Seat 1 District 1 to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Councilman Edwin Boyd; to provide for the appointment of the Candler County Probate Judge as the Elections Superintendent and to provide for the appointment of the City of Metter City Clerk as Qualifying Officer. Councilwoman Kilcrease seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

2017 SPLOST Negotiations

Ms. Cody said that she has been contacted by the county to meet them on Thursday at lunch to discuss the 2017 SPLOST. She asked Councilwoman Colson and Mayor Elect Boyd if they would be available for that meeting. The city committee members consist of Ms. Cody, Councilwoman Colson and Mayor Elect Boyd. Council agreed for Mayor

Called Meeting, August 28, 2017

Elect Boyd to continue on the committee since he will be coming back on board with the city in January.

Ms. Cody said that she will need guidance from council on the 20% level 2 project that has been proposed by the county. There's not going to be a legal opinion presented to council that this project is permissible under the statute. It is too grey for the bond attorneys to feel comfortable giving an opinion in that regard. Councilwoman Kilcrease asked Ms. Cody what will happen if the city does not agree. Ms. Cody said that SPLOST will default to the statute rather than an intergovernmental agreement. So it will be a five year SPLOST rather than six year. They will most likely still do the 20 % unless we contest it in court. If we did not contest it in court then the proceeds would be distributed based on the population basis which is how they are distributed currently. Councilwoman Colson said that even though we say no, they can do it anyway. Ms. Cody said yes unless we file an injunction and won in court. Mayor Trapnell said that his concern is if there were a disgruntled citizen and they were to challenge it, would the whole thing fall apart. Ms. Cody said that is very possible. Ms. Cody said that this is an important issue and we need to decide how to proceed.

Councilwoman Colson asked if we could get the Welch Group's take on it. Ms. Cody said that she is sure that they would. Ms. Cody said that at the last meeting council decided for the city and county attorneys would contact the bond attorney, who has some specialties in this arena. Brent did contact him and we are under the belief that maybe that gentleman would provide us with a legal opinion that what was being proposed was appropriate under the statute. He declined to do that.

Mayor Elect Boyd asked is it true that if the city disagrees that halts it or are we forced to comply anyway. Ms. Cody said that it depends on the avenue that you take for your disagreement. If you just disagree and say that you will not enter into an intergovernmental agreement giving our blessing to that then it would not halt the SPLOST. The county could continue to call the SPLOST and could call the 20% project as a Level 2 Project and then also disburse funds on a population basis. If you chose to disagree in the form of an injunction or some legal maneuvering then it could halt it. Ms. Cody said that she is not recommending either of those things. She is just trying to give council all the options for consideration. Mayor Trapnell said we need to consider the cost of an injunction and that citizens may get the perception that the city is against the hospital. Which is not the case.

Councilwoman Colson asked what affect that would have on SPLOST coming up for a vote in November. Ms. Cody said that she hasn't studied that close enough. She said that her guess would be that the court would not let us hold the election. Mayor Trapnell said that he agrees with Councilwoman Colson that we need to see if the Welch Group can give us a feel on for it. Ms. Cody said that we are getting down to the deadline. Remember we have got to have ballots prepared for early voting, which is going to start in October. The county would like for us to have an intergovernmental agreement in place.

The advantage to the intergovernmental agreement is twofold; one it is a six year SPLOST rather than a five year SPLOST, and two; you can define your level one and level two county-wide projects if you are inclined to do so for the benefit of the whole community. October 16th is early voting. The ballots will have to be prepared well in advance of that date. So we are down to the wire.

Ms. Cody said that she thinks the problem is as she reads the statute is that a level one or a level two project for SPLOST is clearly defined as a "county-wide project that". A county-wide project is a capital expenditure by definition. We haven't shown, as of yet, that the debt incurred by the hospital was for capital expenditures. So there is a question of whether those funds would be appropriately used. Councilwoman Colson said that she thinks that some of the debt was used for capital but the question is how much is necessary to deem it a capital project. She said they put a roof on the building. She said that as she understands it, some of it is debt that was incurred due to some bad decisions with software and things like that. Councilwoman Colson said that it is the county's way of wiping out that \$90 that they accessed on the tax bills. That is their idea of a solution

Called Meeting, August 28, 2017

since the \$90 was so un-popular with the citizens. Councilwoman Colson said that her concern is if it is legal. If it is not, then we have all agreed to it, then they may come back to us and ask for the money back.

Ms. Cody said that the county has an entirely different interpretation of this issue than the city. They think it is a perfectly legal acceptable use of the funds. Ms. Cody said that one of us is wrong. This is a decision that could cost the city \$600,000 of projected SPLOST funds.

Radio Issue

Ms. Cody said she was invited to meet at the Sheriff's office regarding the radio system for our public safety personnel. On the September County Commissioner's agenda, there will be a motion to approve the purchase of a new radio system for public safety that will be placed at the Sheriff's office. That system is expected to be somewhere in the neighborhood of \$750,000. It will require, for communication purposes, that all of our police officers, and fire fighters, both career and volunteer, and anyone else that needs a handheld radio be issued one. The unit that they have selected is \$4,000 per handheld radio. We will need about 50 radios at \$4,000 each. The system should be in place by Christmas. This will allow for better radio communication. Ms. Cody said that she does not have any objection of us pursuing better radio communications. It would be most appropriate for our citizens and public safety personnel. That is \$200,000 the city is not prepared for. Ms. Cody said that she was not included in any of this until today. This has not been developed in any of our CIP's. It has not been put in our SPLOST.

Ms. Cody said that another concern is that they have not done any testing for the reliability of the radios inside buildings. We asked for some kind of testing to make sure that we didn't spend all of this money and still couldn't communicate inside the hospital, schools, etc. If that happens then we will have to buy some additional equipment to make that happen. Captain Shore said that the representative from Motorola will be back in town to meet with us on Thursday and maybe he will have some alternatives to that. There may be some other options available to cut the cost.

Councilwoman Kilcrease said that she doesn't understand them making this kind of decision and not including all the entities that would be involved in the use of such communication system. If the city does not have the funds to pay does that mean the city will have to come up with their own communication system? Councilman Thomas said that the county did mention that they were looking at a new communication system at one of the dinners we attended at Beverick's. Chief Shore said that a lot of their equipment has been struck by lightning. He said that is part of their explanation for it. Councilwoman Kilcrease said that they still should have had communication with the city concerning this.

Ms. Cody said that if you take the \$600,000 SPLOST funds and the \$200,000 for the radios, this is nearly \$1,000,000 that we are not prepared for. Councilwoman Colson said that the county is also raising our taxes inside the city. Ms. Cody said that she is personally and as your city manager an advocate for saving the hospital. She said please don't misunderstand what she is saying. We absolutely have to have a hospital in this city. Ms. Cody said that she is also an advocate for upgrading our communications for our public safety personnel and the service of our citizens. It is just going to cost us \$800,000 to \$1,000,000.

Ms. Cody said that we left the meeting needing more information. We have asked for some information on different models of radios that may be cheaper. We also asked for a meeting with the Motorola representative so that our folks could ask questions.

Computer Issue

Our financial software at city hall gave us a critical error message. That message translates into its dying. This week Ms. Cody will be issuing the approval of a patch to hold the financial software together. It will cost around \$2,500. We hope this will hold us until we can get bids out for new financial software.

Called Meeting, August 28, 2017

ADJOURNMENT

After no further business, Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilwoman Colson seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Mayor Trapnell thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Angie Conner, City Clerk

William M. Trapnell, Mayor