



MINUTES

Mayor & Council Work Session Meeting January 31, 2023 • 6:00 PM



Council Chambers, 50 Booster Field Drive, Whitesburg, Georgia 30185

I. CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Amy Williford

START TIME: 6:05 PM

- Silence All Electronic Devices
- Ascertain Quorum

ELECTED OFFICIALS & CITY STAFF ATTENDING:

- | | |
|--|---|
| √ Mayor, Amy Williford (AW) | √ Councilmember, Lucy Gamble (LG) |
| √ Councilmember, Chris Lewis (CL) | √ Councilmember, Donna Whitley (DW) |
| √ Water Superintendent, Robert Gamble (RG) | √ Chief Of Police, Chris Gilliland (CG) |
| √ Assistant City Clerk, Wanice Odell (WO) | |

II. INVOCATION: Water Superintendent Robert Gamble

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Councilmember Chris Lewis

IV. REVIEW OF AGENDA: Mayor Amy Williford

V. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:

Mayor Williford stated we will be asking for the approval of the following minutes at the February 6th Council Meeting:

WS Minutes: (10/25/2022, 11/29/2022, 12/29/2022); Mayor & Council Minutes 12/12/2022
Special Called Meetings 12/19/2022, 01/17/2023

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS & DISCUSSION ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Mayor Williford welcomed everyone and asked has everyone had time to review the Agenda and were there any comments; only thing mentioned was to add the adopting of the 2022 Budget for this year, until the 2023 Budget is complete. Also, tonight we will discuss the Sammy Duke property and see how it goes before we decide if we want to add it to the Agenda for the February 6th meeting. If there is nothing else, we will now start the Business Session with Councilmember Whitley:

VII. BUSINESS SESSION:

1. **Councilmember Whitley** shared that we will be opening the (4) Sealed Bids-City Surplus Vehicles that were advertised in the Times Georgian newspaper on June 6, 2023 as a Public Notice, stating City Hall would accept sealed bids beginning 01/17/2023 to 01/31/2023 and would be opened at the regular Council meeting on February 6, 2023. Tab 1

Councilmember Whitley has been working with Wanice & Wendy who both work with our water customers and the Utility Billing System and see have seen the amount of money that customers are leaving the city stuck with when they leave. She also shared the need to revise the current Water Customer Guidelines, by changing some of the fees for services such as: new proposed Water Deposit for renters \$275 and Owners \$75, that's the beginning of things that needs updating. There is also the need to have "No Exceptions" on water cut-off days, because these fees just cannot keep rolling over and setting up payment arrangements it causes extra unnecessary paperwork for the office staff. Also, we are considering adding an Administrative Fee of \$25 on water cut-off day if someone on the cut-off list comes and pays their water bill before they have been actually cut-off. However, this is not really fair to everyone, since those at the front of the line don't have time to run up and pay their bill – if that makes sense. Next, was the reconnect fees; first reconnect in same year would continue at \$50, and the next reconnect fee within the same year and after would go up to \$100. Other cities in our have some of these same practices and fees. Councilmember Whitley stated she had mentioned to Councilmember Gamble and other ladies who helped with the Care Fund that they should encourage these customers to ask for help earlier and not wait until cut-off day. Councilmember Whitley stated there will be a proposal to be "No More Payments" accepted from customers by



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Robert or Tim while in the working. All payments will be made at the office, online, mail, or drop-box. Mayor Williford asked I we have a comparison of water deposits from other cities. Councilmember Whitley responded that she does, and they were for MZ, Temple, Bowdon, and Douglasville and will provide them at the next meeting on Feb 6th. Some of the deposits were as high as \$300.00.

Councilmember Gamble stated that if a customer already couldn't pay their \$125 or more water bill, because they get paid on the 3rd of the month and you are cutting them off on the 1st. All that combined – combined – combined – I just don't see that giving people any leeway when there is people who are on a fixed income and everything just goes up – up – up and many of these are seniors raising their grandkids and they don't get money and they have to feed them and everything. Then you want to add and Admin fee of \$25 plus a cut off fee of \$50 too? Councilmember Whitley said no, but we have got to stop letting these customer stop just building up the bills and then leaving them on our books. Mayor Williford stated that Georgia Power, Atlanta Gas, Phone Companies, Cable Companies don't allow people to do this and we as a Water Company cannot either. Councilmember Whitley stated that she would feel awful if someone is without water, but the bills go out by the 30th of the month if not before, and they have enough time to pay if they would just plan better. Councilmember Gamble stated, even if they can come up with the \$125 on cut off day to pay, how are they going to pay if they are at work and don't get off until 6pm the office is closed. Mayor Whitley stated they know when the bill is due and when cut off day is, they just need to plan better. Councilmember Gamble said so, you say you mean you're going to just cut everyone off just like that? Councilmember Whitley said yes, that is correct. Councilmember Gamble said okay so it's bad enough we got to live down the speed trap, now we got to live down the water trap too. Well, I just think everyone has a right to their own opinion and I just don't see why the fees have to be so extravagant.

Councilmember Whitley stated we are not voting on this today, we are putting these out here as recommendations and we are considering everyone's opinions, but we need to get out rates and practices in line with everybody else too. Councilmember Gamble commented that she is just asking if there can be some bend in here. You have to remember when these customers come to the Care Fund, I do ask them why they wait to the last minute to get help, most of the time they say I was trying to do it by myself; you know these people do have their pride and asking for help. She said I'm just telling you what they tell me is all – I just think the fees could be a little lesser. Mayor Williford stated that the Natural Gas company charges a reconnect fee plus an new deposit fee before they will turn your gas back on – how about that! Councilmember Gamble says she knows the electric company has pre-pay; we don't have pre-pay for water. It would be nice if we did, then maybe we wouldn't have this situation.

2. Councilmember Gamble – Roof Repairs

Tab 2

We have 3 bids to present for the work on roof repairs to the Recreation Building/Gym:

Eagle Watch Roofing: \$32,400 - Redo Macs Metals LLC: \$31,500 - Redo
Matt Braswell: \$7,000 - Replacing "only screws", removing skylights & replace with metal
Road Repairs

There is also 2 Road Projects up for approval (Jones Mill Road and Kelly Street) these will be paid for from 2018 SPLOST Funds and the 2023 LMIG Funds.

<u>McIntosh Asphalt Paving Concrete</u>	<u>Magnum Paving, Inc</u>	<u>Charlie T. Paving Co</u>
Jones Mill Rd = \$66,359.15	493,800.00	339,981.30
Kelly Street = \$18,805.60	51,299.00	57,264.00



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2. Councilmember Gamble – Recreation Department Rentals

Tab 2

Councilmember Gamble stated she has been doing some research on recreation rentals in the area and has noticed that we are the only ones that do not charge a separate price when using the Kitchen. So, after this fiasco is done with fixing all the roof repairs, we are going to set a new pricing and hopefully it will start in April, where we will have a set price for the Kitchen, a price for the Lobby, and a price for the Gym. Also, there is a charge to use the Large Pavilion, even though people seem to be ignoring this and using it anyway. So, I want the officers to know that we go to find a way to enforce this, it is not for casual use. The Small Pavilion anyone can use on a first come first serve basis with the Water Pad. We will have these rental prices ready at the net meeting for review and hopefully we can get them started for April. We also have Regulation Rental Fees for the Upper and Lower Ballfields, which are set-up at the same prices as always with no alterations. The other fields are used for the younger kids. Councilmember Whitley asked if there is a way to figure how we can rent out just the gym, I've had several people to request renting it this past winter. Mayor Williford commented; yes, we have don't that in the past. We don't give them access to the Lobby area; they use the outside door to access the Gym. Councilmember Gamble commented that the problem we have is them coming in the Lobby area like to use the restrooms. Councilmember Whitley said no, they would use the ones outdoors at the Water Pad.

3. Councilmember Lewis - I only have a couple of things to cover

Tab 3

We will be asking for approval of Police Clerk, April Fordham Attending to attend the 2023 ICJE Conference that is part of her annual court continuing education requirements, estimated at \$550.00, which is April 27-28 in Atlanta, Georgia.

We will be asking for approval of the Bundle Package Plan (8 Body Cams & 8 Tasers) that will be paid from the ARPA "American Rescue Plan Act of 2021" Funds, in the amount of \$86,812 that will be spread over 5 years. First initial payment of \$26,331.84 and following payments of \$15,120.04 through year 2027.

4. Mayor Williford – At this time I'll ask City Attorney, Kevin Drummond to speak on behalf of Mike & Donna Holder regarding the 1936 Sammy Duke Road Annexation.

Kevin Drummond, City Attorney stated the Holders are wanting to annex 1936 Sammy Duke Road to be zoned industrial; however, there is still a discrepancy on the tax records regarding the acres at the racetrack and the acres for the mobile home. Mr. Drummond stated what needs to happen is the application needs to go before the Whitesburg Planning & Zoning Committee, so they can consider the zoning. The Planning & Zoning Committee would then make a recommendation to the City Council, and it would need to be advertised when the Council will consider. The Council would consider both the Zoning and Annexation. The Council may choose to go ahead and approve the Zoning change, but the zoning change is conditional upon the annexation approval. I've already notified the County of the Application and they are aware it should be coming to their office.

Mayor Williford – Is there any other questions?

Duana Williford – I don't understand how we can rezone something that's inside the county.

Kevin Drummond – The rezoning can only happen if the annexation happens. If the annexation does not take place, neither does the rezoning. If the annexation is approved, then typically the rezoning is approved too. The reason is the people who are annexing the property also want to change the use of the property. Either I or the Holders will verify the correct information regarding the address for the racetrack property and mobile home.

I. CITIZEN COMMENTS: (Please state name & address; speaking limited to 3 minutes)

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Duana Williford – Relating to the road projects, will Kelly Street include the potholes in front of Moore Street? Councilmember Gamble answered not initially. Duana said the reason she was asking was because Spectrum Cable has been out there working and didn't want that to interfere.

Mayor Williford – Does anyone have anything else? If not, we will move on to the Staff Comments

II. MAYOR/ COUNCIL/CITY STAFF COMMENTS:

Chief Gilliland – I don't have anything other than everyone is working hard.

Superintendent Gamble -Need to be mindful of the possibility that there may be issues with some high-water bills from the cold back in December, where we had some freezing temperatures. Mayor Williford stated we will do as we have always done in the past, allow for 1 adjusted bill per calendar year.

Everyone in agreement? This covers the last billing cycle, right? **Superintendent Gamble** responded, yes.

Councilmember Whitley – I heard back from Mr. Rogers at Turnip Seed Engineering, and he will be sending information about short-term and long-term cost estimates about bringing our water system up to date.

Councilmember Gamble – Seniors had good time at our January meeting. Don't forget the February Meeting will also be our Valentine Meeting. Remember to call and check on each other. If you call your neighbor and they don't answer that day and you leave a message but still don't hear back from them that could be a sign they are not okay – reach out to the care fund or call the police department and we can have someone go check on them, this is more important in the extreme cold months and hot summer months.

Councilmember Lewis – I don't have anything, thank you.

Mrs. Wanice - I don't have anything, thank you.

Mayor Williford – said if there's nothing else, we are adjourned. Thank you and we will see you all on Monday night.

III. ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Williford

Ending Time: 6:50 pm

Amy R. Williford, Mayor

ATTEST: Clerk

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