



MINUTES

Mayor & Council Meeting

May 8, 2023



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

Elected Officials Present

Mayor, Amy Williford (AW)
 Councilmember, Chris Lewis (CL)
 Councilmember, Lucy Gamble (LG)
 Councilmember, Donna Whitley (DW)

City Staff Present

Water Superintendent, Robert Gamble (RG)
 Chief Of Police, Chris Gilliland (CG)
 Assistant City Clerk, Wanice Odell (WO)

The Mayor and City Council met for a regular meeting on May 8, 2023. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Amy Williford at 6:01 pm, stating we had a Quorum and requesting everyone to silence all electronic devices.

The first order of business was an invocation led by Water Superintendent, Robert Gamble, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilmember Chris Lewis.

There were no additions to the agenda and no citizen comments were made.

I. Minutes For Approval: (April 4, 2023 Mayor & Council Meeting Minutes)

Motion By: Councilmember Lewis to approve the April 4, 2023 Mayor & Council Meeting Minutes, **Second By:** Councilmember Gamble, **Motion Approved** with No Objections.

II. Citizen Comments & Discussion On Agenda Items: (Please state name & address; speaking limited to 3 minutes)

There were no Citizen Comments.

III. Business Session: (Councilmembers have the opportunity to bring items before the Council)

Mayor Williford shared about the upcoming Mandated City Clerk Training at the Carl Vinson Institute of Government in Athens from September 10-12 with an estimated cost of \$2,000 for the required training of Assistant City Clerk Wanice Odell and City Clerk/Councilmember Whitley to attend. Mayor Williford asked for any citizen questions; there were none. **Motion By:** Councilmember Lewis to approve the September 10-12 Mandated City Clerk Training at the Carl Vinson Institute of Government in Athens for both Mrs. Odell and Mrs. Whitley, **Second By:** Councilmember Gamble, **Motion Approved** with No Objections.

Mayor Williford also shared about the upcoming Mandated Court Clerk Certification that is needed for Utility Billing Clerk Wendy Morris, in Columbus, Ga (\$382 Marriott Hotel). We will get the cost of the Classroom Training at the next WS Meeting. Mayor Williford asked if there were any citizen questions; there were none. **Motion By:** Councilmember Whitley to approve the upcoming Mandated Court Clerk Certification for Utility Billing Clerk Wendy Morris, in Columbus, Ga (\$382 Marriott Hotel). **Second By:** Councilmember Lewis, **Motion Approved** with No Objections.

Mayor Williford stated we have a few corrections that need to be made to the Feb 6, 2023 Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes; they are as follows:

Correction#1: Page 2, Item 4 - Recreation Gym Roof Repairs are being paid from 2013 SPLOST Funds not 2018). **Motion By:** Councilmember Whitley to approve the changes as read above to the Feb 6, 2023 Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes. **Second By:** Councilmember Lewis, **Motion Approved** with No Objections.

Correction#2: Page 2 Item 4 - **McIntosh Asphalt Paving Concrete** the work of (**Kelly Street at \$18,805.60**) to be paid from 2013 SPLOST Funds not 2018). Quote – For Multiple Road Repairs on (McIntosh Street at Railroad Street and 303 Hwy 16) - Due To Water Repairs - \$4,784.65 To Be Paid From 2013 SPLOST and 2023 LMIG Funds. **Motion By:** Councilmember Lewis to approve the changes as read above to the Feb 6, 2023 Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes. **Second By:** Councilmember Gamble, **Motion Approved** with No Objections.



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Councilmember Gamble shared regarding neglected properties within the Whitesburg city limits that go against city code and are decreasing surrounding property values. Here are a list of the properties: 44 Pitman Drive, 55 & 57 & 164 Brannon Street, 106 McIntosh Trail (just needs to be torn down), 10 Aycock Street, 1057 Main Street (6 units and each unit only has one way entrance in), 70 Forrest Circle, 145 & 152 Moore Street, 118 N. Five Notch Road, 688 Main Street, and 30 Kelly Street. (these are primarily overgrown properties where snakes & rats are living causing potential harm to others, mailboxes are being taken over with weeds, junk piled on properties, etc.).

Someone from the audience was speaking of another property but did not come to the podium and I did not get the address nor the person who was speaking.

Citizen ask a question, but did not come to the podium to speak; I believe it was either Mrs. Margery Bouris at 450 Black Dirt Rd. or Mrs. Imogene Frazier at 698 Main St., stated okay, that's the problem, now what's going to be done. **Mayor Williford** asked Chief Gilliland to respond. **Chief Gilliland** commented that he has been by several of these properties already and in general discussion trying to be nice saying hey you all need to look at this area here; I mostly got the same response from everyone is that we will address it as we can afford to. So, I will pay another official visit to each of these properties to address these concerns, and then they will get a letter in the mail stating they have an allotted amount of time to get the area cleaned up and if not; at that point we will begin writing citations. **Citizen** commented that sounded good.

Councilmember Gamble stated there's an ongoing issue with numbers not being on the mailboxes; makes the properties difficult to identify. Also, some of these properties may be bank owned.

General Discussion Council Members regarding the lack of funds for citizens being the main reason given for not doing a better job with maintaining properties.

Councilmember Lewis had two (2) items for approval. First item is Chief Gilliland is scheduled for Police Chief Training in Savannah, Georgia July 23rd - 26th (Approx Training Cost \$350). **Motion By:** Councilmember Whitley to approve train for Chief Gilliland as requested above. **Second By:** Councilmember Gamble, **Motion Approved** with No Objections.

Note: Cost for Lodging/Meals for Chief Gilliland's Police Chief Training in Savannah, Georgia July 23rd - 26th will be presented at the next WS Meeting.

Second item for approval was we obtained two (2) Quotes for the tree removal work needed on Kelly Street before the roadwork repairs are able to be done by McIntosh. The Quotes were from (Rodriguez Tree Services at \$4,900.00, and Rubes Tree Service at \$8,800.00). The reason Rubes quote was significantly more than Rodriguez is because they would need to rent the equipment to do the job. **Motion By:** Councilmember Lewis to award the job for the tree removal work needed on Kelly Street to Rodriguez Tree Services at the quoted price of \$4,900.00. **Mayor Williford** asked how many trees were being taken down. Councilmember Lewis explained it's the one (1) really large oak tree and there are a couple of small trees he's taking down for free, and a couple of large stumps that he will be removing that's included in this quote. **Mayor Williford** stated okay we need a second to this motion. **Second By:** Councilmember Whitley, **Motion Approved** with No Objections. **Councilmember Lewis** said the only thing remaining for the City to do is to notify the property owners. **Mayor Williford** stated she would get with City Attorney Kevin Drummond to handle.

IV. **Citizen Comments:** (Please state name & address; speaking limited to 3 minutes)

Sheri Wright from Whitesburg Library gave an update on a few things going on like they will be having a community garden again this year; last year they gave away a little over 100 pounds of food and hope to do around 200 pounds this year. Hard to believe it's almost summer and the Summer Reading Program will be starting at the Library starting May 22nd, anyone signing up will receive a free book. We also have several events lined up for the summer: **May 30th** Hydroponic Gardening 11:20-12:30 pm at Library, **June 6th** Death Of McIntosh Story 11:20-12:30 pm at McIntosh Reserve Free One Day Park Pass Available, **June 13th** Build & Take Home A Bird House 11:30-1:00 pm at Library (sign-up required limited to 20), **June 20th** Touch A



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Tractor & Homemade Ice Cream 11:30 -1:00 pm at Library, **June 27th** Clean-Up Our Streets Day 11:30-1:00 pm Meet At Library, **July 5th-7th** Hand In Reading Trackers at Library, **July 11th** Blueberry Pancakes & Prizes 11:30 – 1:00 pm at Library. Come out and join us, thank you.

Margie Bouris at 450 Black Dirt Road commented that she believe someone from the new subdivision mentioned at the last council meeting, why you guys can't appoint like a committee to look into how these people can be helped with their run-down properties; or maybe all these people who have issues with their properties could come together and help each other. Cleaning up Whitesburg and making it look beautiful is an absolutely marvelous idea, but I haven't heard a plan to make it happen by just handing out letters and citations telling them they have to do it without helping them figure out a way to do it.

Mayor Williford stated that the ones who do have the means to fix their properties, once they come to court, they are given so many days to show progress; if they don't, then they are fined. Then they are given additional days to finish; if not they are fined each time they appear in court. They are required to show photos each time they appear in court to show there is progress; otherwise they are fined. **Margie Bouris** stated well if the citizens don't have the funds to start with, how is this helping the matter. **Mayor Williford** stated well a lot of these citizens for starters just need to haul off a bunch of junk, and that doesn't really cost anything. **Mayor Williford** asked if anyone else had any comments, none given; therefore we moved to City Staff comments.

V. Mayor / Council / City Staff Comments: (Mayor Will Go Around Asking For Any Comments)

Chief Gilliland - Looks like we are going to be able to get approval to get more Firearms Training Qualifications completed here at the Georgia Power Shooting Range. We are also in the final stages of finishing up K-9 Molly's training; then they will be going to get certified within the next few weeks.

Water Superintendent Gamble – In the past few weeks the City has loosing water, this is due to the failure of old water service lines. This issue has caused us to need to buy additional water from Carroll County Water Authority. We have got to figure out a plan to get this issue fixed. I am not aware of the Water or City Budget this year to know if there is money available. **Mayor Williford** asked what area? **Water Superintendent Gamble** responded it's pretty much all over town, not one certain area. **Mayor Williford** then asked if it would be possible to do the repairs in sections a little at a time. I believe **Councilmember Whitley** asked if these service lines being replaced were part of the Turnipseed Well Project? I believe **Water Superintendent Gamble** stated these issues have just started over the past few weeks. **Mayor Williford** asked Superintendent Gamble if he would go ahead and start getting quotes to make repairs by sections, at least materials maybe. Discussion continued among Councilmembers about how to handle this matter; the conversation was too much to capture in the minutes. **Water Superintendent Gamble** stated there is a lot of Fiber Optic Cable involved, and this is the biggest challenge when replacing the service lines. I believe there was mention again by **Councilmember Whitley** of reviewing the Turnipseed Well Project to see if some of this work would or could be covered under this project.

Councilmember Whitley stated she did not have any additional comments at this time.

Councilmember Gamble reminded everyone about the upcoming Senior Meeting on the 3rd Monday of the month. Also, Robert and Tim have been working on the repairs for the Water Park, but we are still not sure if it will be in operation for Memorial Day, it could even be as late at June. **Councilmember Whitley** commented that she only had one contractor show up to give a quote for doing the concrete work and we need at least two (2) before we are able to decide on a contractor for the work. **Councilmember Gamble** also mentioned it looks like someone is trying make a racetrack around the Senior Center because they do not like going over the humps that are put there to make people slowdown in the first place. This is messing up the yards, and is causing trouble for the seniors getting to and from the building.



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Mayor Williford addressed Water Superintendent Gamble stating she received a phone call from Principal Long at Whitesburg Elementary saying they were having a picnic here on Tuesday, and wanted to make sure the restrooms would be open. **Chief Gilliland** stated he understood the picnic was going to be in the pavilion, but didn't have any details; he only heard it from other employees, saying they would be walking down the sidewalk to the pavilion.

Mayor Williford updated everyone on the Lighting Project on Landon Drive stating that Tom Isabel is in the process of retiring from GPC after 44 years and we have someone new that will be coordinating this project; I am working with him to make sure everything goes as planned.


Councilmember Lewis stated he has no comments.

Assistant City Clerk Mrs. Odell stated she has no comments.

Mayor Williford, If there are no other comments, I need a motion we adjourn. **Motion By:** Councilmember Gamble to adjourn., **Second By:** Councilmember Lewis. **Motion Approved** with No Objections.

VI.

The May 8, 2023, Mayor & Council Meeting ended at 6:46 pm.



 Amy R. Williford, Mayor



 ATTEST: Clerk