

# WALNUT GROVE CITY COUNCIL MEETING

THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 2018

7:00 P.M.

**Present:**

Mayor Lamar Lee  
Carol Witcher  
Mark Moore  
Linda Pilgrim  
Mike Malcom, City Attorney

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order by Mayor Lamar Lee

**II. INVOCATION**

Invocation given by Carol Witcher

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

**IV. AGENDA APPROVAL**

Clerk, Katherine Glass stated the agenda needs to be amended. There is a tree leaning over the road at Park St that needs to be taken down. Alan Barton, Public Works Director, has quotes for taking the tree down. This will need to be added to the agenda.

Mark Moore made a motion to amend the agenda by adding item "C" Tree Quote under New Business, motion seconded by Linda Pilgrim, opportunity for discussion, motion passed.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Maxine McClanahan – resides at 4081 Habersham Circle, Walnut Grove spoke on behalf of the Walnut Grove Library. She asked the Council not to reinstate the \$4,900.00 which was cut from the budget in the 2017/2018 budget and again this year. But instead to increase that amount to \$52,000.00. She recommended the \$7,000.00 increase be moved from line item # 52.4000 street sidewalk and curbs.

Amy Hicks – Monroe, GA - She gave an update on how the Library is doing.

**VI. MINUTES APPROVAL: MAY 10, 2018 CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

Linda Pilgrim – I have a question about the minutes. I haven't seen last month's minutes online. City Clerk – Kathy Glass – The minutes will not be on the website until the Council approves them. Linda Pilgrim – Is that true every month? Kathy Glass – yes mam.

Motion made minutes be approved as submitted by Mark Moore, seconded by Carol Witcher, opportunity for discussion, motion passed.

## **VII. BUDGET REVIEW /ADOPTION BY COUNCIL**

Mark Moore made a motion the budget be passed as presented, Carol Witcher seconded the motion, discussion – Carol Witcher – She stated she would like to see this budget increase funding for the library to at least \$50,000.00. She believes we can afford to do this. Mark Moore – my comments are I have reviewed this I would love the library as well to be funded. I just don't think at this time we are able to do so. There are a lot of other things in this City that need to be done. Mike Malcom – Well then we need to vote on it. The motion can be amended. Mark Moore – No I want to leave it as is. Linda Pilgrim – if we leave it as is can it be amended at a later date? Mike Malcom – we can amend the budget. Mike Malcom – to Mark Moore – are you amending your motion? Mark Moore – No. Carol Witcher – I rescind my second. Mayor Lee – Is there another one? Linda Pilgrim seconded the motion made by Mark Moore. Motion carried.

## **VIII. PUBLIC WORKS REPORT**

Alan Barton, Director of Public Works – Side walk in Magnolia Springs. We have a sidewalk with a hole in it. The hole is pretty good size. The only way to fix it is to pour concrete in the hole. Looking at the size of the hole it will take a yard of concrete. The Mayor and I have talked about the crosswalk at the Park. If we do these at the same time it will save money. It will take around 4 yards to do this. If we do these together it will save \$150.00 not have a load fee. We could pour the sidewalks and then take what is left and pour in the hole. Renting the excavator to dig out for the sidewalks, the lumber to form the walks and gate and materials will run about \$1,800.00. We already got a quote on the cross walk. So you are looking at probably \$4,500 for the crosswalk. There was further discussion on the price of the crosswalk and repair of the side walk in Magnolia Springs.

## **IX. FINANCIAL REPORT**

City Clerk, Katherine Glass directed the Council Members to the report in their notebooks the financials were also emailed along with the agenda to Council Members. Mark Moore made a motion to approve the financials as submitted; Carol Witcher seconded the motion, opportunity for discussion, motion passed, unanimous.

## **X. CLERK'S REPORT**

Activity report given on all business licenses, citations, other permits and park reservations given by Katherine Glass.

## **XI. CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT**

Grant Satterfield, Code Enforcement Officer – Everyone is talking about grass and that is where I have spent most of my time. I issued 14 notice of ordinance violations.

## **MAYOR'S REPORT**

First, I would like to say to everyone please keep Kevin Shultz's daughter in your prayers. She had a fall off a skate board and received a traumatic brain injury. She is doing as well as could be expected. That is why he is not here tonight, he is with her. We had the new heat

and air pump put in City Hall. The Clerk's computer started getting slower and slower. We called our IT man and he suggested we go ahead and get the new computers before hers crashed. So, the new computers are now in. There has been a meeting with the City's engineers and Mr. Coleman. He is working on the conditions, so he can get started on Phase I of his project. The GMA conference in Savannah will be June 22 through June 26<sup>th</sup>. We have the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Fire and EMS station on the 19<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. We will have 3 public hearings on the property tax for setting the mileage rate. Two of the hearings will be held on the same day which will be Thursday June 28<sup>th</sup> one at 10:00 a.m. and one at 7:00 p.m. The third hearing will be Thursday July 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. before we start the Council Meeting.

## **XII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **a. Maintenance of Spray field**

Alan Barton – Last month I took two days vacation. I never like to take over two or three days at a time. On Friday after the Council meeting on Thursday night I got three phone calls about what was said at the Council meeting. So when I got back on Monday I talked to the Mayor. I asked for an Open Records request to get a copy of the tape and of the attendance list so I could hear what was said, how it was said and who said what. So, I reviewed that and it was my understanding that when the Clerk said something about the fertilizer needed to be voted on. The fertilizer needed to be voted on because the City spent a lot of money getting that Bermuda grass sprigged in that spray field which is required by the EPD. Then Ms. Pilgrim asked who cuts the hay. Well in the March meeting when I asked about the preemergent that would kill all the weeds where the Bermuda grass could grow and expand and keep all that from washing out over there you asked who cut the hay and I told you I did. So you knew I cut the hay over there. Then your son Brian who works for public works, works under me and he knows I cut the hay. I have cut the hay since way before the City owned the property when Mr. Dial owned it. Me and my brother cut the hay. Then the City bought it we quit cutting the hay for five years maybe. Then the Mayor asked me if I would be interested in cutting the hay over there where the City wouldn't have to spend money bush hogging. I always am interested in extra hay. You never know when there might be a drought. I normally don't need extra hay because I rent 400 acres and I have 100 acres of my own. I just do it for insurance to have a little hay if I need it. And that is why I cut the hay. When we decided to put in the sewer plant over there and Lanier was awarded the contract between the County and the City. After the meeting was over with it was brought up what once we get the spray field established who was going to cut the hay. The Mayor and the Chairman and Commissioner Timmy Shelnut agreed that I would continue to cut the hay and keep the hay as payment for cutting it for the expense. It was fine for the County it was ok with them and for the City. So last year about this time we had a lot of rain just like we did this year. It was on the second cutting. The Mayor went over there on a Monday morning and saw the Johnson grass and the Bermuda grass was up high as the top of the sprinkler heads, was it not Mayor? He asked me why I hadn't cut the hay. I told him we ain't had no weather to cut the hay. Because you can't cut the hay in one day. You have to have a three or four-day window to cut hay to keep it from getting wet. When it gets wet it ain't no good. So I told him I can cut the hay today because they were calling for 3-4 days no rain. I told him if it is all right with you I will take my personal time at 12:00

o'clock. Because at that time I went to work at 7am till 3:30. So I only took 3 hours on Monday. So he said that is fine. We need to get the hay cut. So I took my personal time and he approved it to go over there and get the hay cut Monday. So I got all the hay cut on Monday. Tuesday the hay was thick so I had to fluff it. I fluffed it and it dried. Wednesday I worked from 7 a.m. till 12:00. We only work a ½ on Wednesday so that gives me 9 ½ hours in the summertime you have all this daylight. So I go and start raking the hay and bailing it. I didn't get done that Wednesday night. So on Thursday I asked the Mayor, they are calling for rain this afternoon and I didn't get through with the hay. If I take 3 more hours of my personal time is it ok for me to go get that hay bailed up and get out of that field before it starts raining and he said sure that's fine. So when I went over there and Brian accused me of cutting the hay on City time I had approval by the Mayor. I took my personal time to cut that hay and the Mayor approved it. I have never cut that hay on City time. I don't have to cut that hay on City time. Linda Pilgrim – So when you cut the hay you are off the City clock? Alan – exactly. Linda Pilgrim – what do you do with the hay after you cut it? Alan - I take it to my house and feed it to my cows if I need it. You can go over there right now. I didn't use all the hay last year. I didn't need it all. There will probably be a hundred rolls of hay over there. I don't never sell that hay. I use that hay. I've got cows. I've got a cow calf operation and I use every bit of that hay. If I don't use it I save it till the next year. Linda Pilgrim – and it keeps? Alan – yes it keeps, Mayor – yes it keeps, Carol – yes it keeps, the way it is baled. Linda Pilgrim – somebody made the comment in last month's meeting that nothing could be done with the hay because it was contaminated. Alan – It will be once you start putting sewage on it. Because once your nitrogen level gets so high it will kill your horses and cows and whatever eats it. Linda Pilgrim - But at this point it is not. Alan – At this point it is not. You are exactly right. At this point you can feed it to anything you want to feed it to. Mayor – Well you better get it fed fast because we are about to have a bunch of houses. And like I said it takes 3 – 4 days to cut hay and I've been farming all my life. I know what I'm doing. You take and cut the hay one day, let it dry 2 days and you can bale it up. I get off at 3:30 and that gives me 6 ½ hours to cut and bale hay in the afternoons. And on Saturdays. If I cut it on Wednesday and let it dry Thursday and Friday and I can bale it on Saturday. You learn how to work this stuff. I don't have to cut that hay on City time. I never have and never will. My daddy was on this Council for 20 years. Linda Pilgrim – I know that. Alan Barton – My mama was on this Council for 8 years and my mama kept the records when the City sent the Clerk to jail when she stole money from the City. If it hadn't been for my mama keeping her records the City would have lost that money. My family has been in this City since the 1800's and I don't have to do wrong. Mayor – Well that goes back.. that ain't got nothing to do with this on the spray field over there. Alan – well like I said the Mayor approved me being off over there cutting that hay and I was using my personal time. Just like the rest of the boys do. If they have something they need to do the Mayor will approve their personal time and they can do what they want to do with it. And the hay had to be cut and the Mayor knew it had to be cut. So we had to get it done. Mark Moore – the way I look at it there are two issues here. First issue is the City Council needs to be knowledgeable about the agreement with you to cut the hay. The second issue about whether you are cutting it on City time is not a matter for the City Council that is between you and Mayor Lee. I've never thought for a minute that you weren't doing this on your own time. We just want to be transparent because I had citizens coming to me saying hey

Alan's cutting hay. I didn't think it was a big deal about Alan cutting hay and I still don't. All I'm asking for is simple transparency. Let 's make it public that we have made an agreement with you. You do what ever you want to with the hay, I don't care, sell it, keep it, feed it. It doesn't matter. So long as we have an agreement in place that you are doing it for the hay and it is public knowledge and that way I don't have citizens coming up to me asking me about it. Alan Barton – I don't how many citizens would know about it because as far back as it is and the gate is locked. The other council members knew about it. The only two that didn't know it and it was brought up in the March meeting that I cut the hay. I told you I did when Ms Pilgrim asked who cut it. So it shouldn't be a surprise to anybody who cut the hay. Mark Moore- to tell you the truth I was associating it with just cutting a field. Whether or not you were collecting the hay off it or not. .. Alan – I do that to help the City out. Every time I cut that hay if you had to pay somebody it would probably cost between \$4,000 and \$5,000 dollars to get that spray field cut. You don't cut that hay like a regular field. You have 160 spray heads you have to go in and out. Mayor Lee – and don't run over them. Alan – and you can't run over them because the type of pipe it is it will cost a whole lot to get it fixed. It was brought up in the last meeting there were two sprinkler heads that were damaged, and they were not damaged by the hay cutter. They were damaged by the zero turn lawn mower where they were trying to get.. there was a down spout on some of the sprinkler heads have to be manually drained and they stick up about 8 – 10". We have to weed eat around them and they were hit by the lawnmower. Because where these are you can't get a tractor near them. It wasn't the spray head it was the drain plug that drains them. Mark Moore – Let me ask you a question. Are you still wanting to do.. Alan – I'll cut the hay but there is going to have to be a signed contract where each of you sign it and I'll sign it too saying that I will cut the hay and I will get the hay as the payment. Linda Pilgrim - what about when the hay is no good? Alan – when the hay is no good it will have to be cut for a fee. I won't cut it for the hay because I can't do anything with it. Linda Pilgrim – would it not be considered city property where it would be cut while you are on city time. Alan- I will never cut it on City time. Linda Pilgrim – I'm saying when it is no good and you are not going to cut it anymore. Alan – the City is going to have to buy their own hay equipment pay somebody else to cut it. Because you can't cut the hay and leave it on the ground. It has so much nitrogen in the ground the State will not let you leave it on the ground. It must be baled and got off. That's why there are four wells over there to test the water for the nitrogen level in the ground. Mark Moore – Can that be used for a landscaper. Alan – that is the only thing it will be good for. You will have to sell it to probably a big construction crew where they have those big grinders where they spray the hay up on these banks. They will set the bale of hay up on a grinder and it will grind it up and blow it up on the banks. Mark Moore – second thing is this like Bermuda grass and it goes dormant? Alan – that's right in the winter time it is dormant. That is why I asked for preemergent over there to kill that grass, the weeds, so the Bermuda grass could spread and stop the erosion. That is one of the main problems we had over there. You would not believe the amount of water that comes off. It looks like a flat spot but it ain't. There is only one way I'll cut it and that is for everybody to sign saying I'll cut it for the hay. And once the sewer lines start on it you will have to take bids. And whoever bids on it will have to understand they will have to have workman comp insurance, liability insurance and everything. Mark Moore – Let me ask you this. Are you willing to keep it cut regardless of when the sewage comes

online until it gets dormant? Alan – for a fee. Once I can't use the hay I'll cut it for a fee. Mark Moore – well what I'm getting at is this agreement you keep the hay until this thing goes on line and you keep it cut until it gets dormant and then we can present a proposal at the start of the year. Alan – In other words you want me to cut it the rest of this year. Mark Moore – that is correct. Alan – Yes, I'll cut it the rest of this year if y'all sign an agreement saying I keep the hay. Everything is understood I keep the hay for cutting it. And then by next year we will have the sewage going on it so the nitrogen level will be too high. So the City will have to open it up for bids I guess. It will cost between \$3,000 and \$5,000 every time you have it cut. And putting water on it, it will have to be cut 3 – 5 times a year. Mark Moore – To the attorney, is there any problems with this ethically? Mike Malcom – We can talk about this and wrap something up. Mark Moore – Do we need to make a motion on this? Carol Witcher – I would like to address something. I'm like Alan I'm an old farmer rancher. I did this stuff in FL and I know what he is saying is the absolute truth. I know that what he is doing is the absolute truth. If it were not, if I had a suspicion that something was out of order I would have already sat down and talked to him but it is not out of order. And to treat the grass the way that Alan is doing it and to treat the hay and all of that I know that stuff. So, I think Alan has done a tremendous job in what he has done and I think that the other episode that took place was totally out of line and inappropriate. Alan Barton – I agree with that 100%. I don't know why an employee of the City stood up and accused me of something he didn't have a clue of what me and the Mayor was talking about. Mark Moore – let me ask you one other question. Do we make it a policy of city employees to fill out personal time request forms? City Clerk – yes. Mark Moore – and keep records of that? Mayor – yes. City Clerk -yes. Mark Moore – then there is no question. Alan Barton – that's what I said. But I just didn't appreciate getting up here and somebody accusing me of doing something wrong. Mark Moore – I don't blame you. Alan Barton – As hard as I've worked to try to keep things in budget and at a minimum for this City and it was allowed to be done that way. Carol Witcher – I personally feel an apology is owed by certain people to Alan because it was a personal attack on his character any way you choose to look at it. And I'm embarrassed that on council we had someone that did that. Alan Barton – There is a few things that have been bothering me. It seems like everybody thinks I was doing something wrong. I've got a few things I want to say. 551 Greenhill Way that property belongs to Brian Pilgrim that works for the Public Works Department. He's been remodeling a trailer over there for five weeks and as of five o'clock today he has not retained a remodeling permit. Now how does he get to do that and nobody else in the City does? That's what I don't understand. Linda Pilgrim – Do you need a permit to run siding? Alan – you need a permit to remodel Linda Pilgrim – He is not remodeling. Alan – yes he is. When You have rotten rafters and rotten ceiling joists you are replacing. Mike Malcom – Let's take this up in separate.. Mayor Lee – right on Alan Barton– Well I mean he attacked me so why can't I .. Mike Malcom – don't use this as a... Mayor Lee – right Mike Malcom - If the Council requests I'll draw up a contract with Mr. Barton. Mayor Lee – that's good. Alan Barton – Yes, that will be the only way I'll cut the hay. Mark Moore – Oh Mr. Barton please come back up here. What started this is something we need to address is the fact that the field needs to be fertilized. Alan Barton – It does. Mark Moore. I know if we have a problem with that grass it is going to cost us ten times as much to get it fixed if we don't keep it up. So it was brought up at the last city council meeting and we didn't know enough about it that we need

fertilizer for that and whether or not this council needs to approve that purchase. Alan Barton – it doesn't really matter to me I don't care either way. If you want that grass to live and spread and look like it is supposed to, you have to treat it like you do a yard. You can't let it just lay out there and hope it does good. Mark Moore – And is this \$3,000 cost is that include weed control or just fertilizer? Alan Barton – the fertilizer if I'm not mistaken it will cost around \$2,000 for Godfrey's Ga Fertilizer in Madison. They are the ones that always come out and done it when Lanier was sprigging it and getting git ready. They bring a truck out and fertilize it. It doesn't have to be fertilized until I get the hay cut. Then you want it fertilized so it will grow and choke out all the weeds left in there. You want the Bermuda grass to get thick. The Bermuda soaks up 400 lbs of nitrogen where a pine tree only soaks up 90lbs. That is why they recommended the Berumda grass so the nitrogen won't soak in the ground and get in your water table. When a test is done on the water and the nitrogen levels are high they will shut down the plant. Do we pay someone to do the fertilizer? Alan Barton - when we pay GA Fertilizer they come out and put the fertilizer on the field. We don't have to touch it. Mark Moore - I want to make a motion to approve the fertilizer for that field, Carol Witcher, seconded the motion, motion Passed.

### **XIII. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **A. IGA With Walton County Regarding the SPLOST 2019**

Mike Malcom – It is my understanding from talking with the County attorney this is something that will be brought up at the next Walton County Board of Commissioners meeting so it is imperative that we address it. Kathy Glass – This agreement was emailed to all the Council Members along with the agenda last Friday. Mayor Lee Is there a motion? Carol Witcher made a motion the agreement be accepted, Linda Pilgrim seconded the motion, motion passed.

#### **B. Contract with Lakeview Environmental to oversee operations and maintenance of the Sewer Plant**

1. Kathy Glass, City Clerk, contacted each councilmember by phone and the following councilmembers verbally agreed to this company: Carol Witcher, Mark Moore and Linda Pilgrim (No vote from Kevin Shultz)  
Motion to formally approve Lakeview Environmental to oversee operations and maintenance of the sewer plant made by Mark Moore, seconded by Linda Pilgrim, motion passed.

#### **C. Tree Quote**

Tree leaning over the road at Park Street and Church Way. The Council had two quotes to review from Johnson Tree Service and Scarborough Tree Service.

Motion made by Carol Witcher to accept the bid from Scarborough Tree Service to remove the leaning tree at Park Street and Church Way, seconded by Mark Moore, opportunity for discussion, motion passed.

### **XIV. DISCUSSION ITEM**

None

### **XV. COUNCIL COMMENTS**

**Mark Moore** – The library is really important to me. I think if you bear with us it will come about. We need to address some other things here in the City. Alan, I apologize for the things that happened at the last City Council meeting. It got out of hand and should have been stopped earlier. I hate that it happened. Your integrity is known throughout the city, so I hate some of the things that were said. Third I am excited about this Lakeview agreement about taking care of our sewer plant. I think this is some great news.

**Linda Pilgrim** – none

**Carol Witcher** – I apologize to the library. I know how important it is. I am sorry this town's leaders can't come up with some way to assist. I promise as long as I sit on this Council I do the best I can to move that the library has more money to spend. I am looking forward to this Council going to Savannah and take classes to help better this City. I applaud Alan Barton for being the person he is with his family history of service on this Council. I applaud Alan Barton for the integrity that he has and what he does for this City. There is no way you people sitting out there can understand what this man saves us in not having to call repair men in to do things. He does it. And he does it without any accolades. He is one of the most valuable people in this City. And we need to treat him with a larger degree of respect.

Mark Moore made a motion we adjourn, seconded by Carol Witcher, Motion carried unanimously.

Council meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Approved by the Mayor and Council this \_\_\_\_ day of July, 2018.

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Mayor Lamar Lee

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Katherine A. Glass, City Clerk