

**WALNUT GROVE CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
THURSDAY MARCH 9, 2017  
MINUTES**

Present at Meeting:

Mayor Lamar Lee  
Kathy Dimsdale  
Wayne Dimsdale  
Carol Witcher  
Joe Reitman, City Attorney  
Katherine Glass, City Clerk

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order by Mayor Lamar Lee

**II. INVOCATION**

Invocation given by Joe Reitman

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

**IV. AGENDA APPROVAL**

Wayne Dimsdale made a motion to approve the Agenda, Carol Witcher seconded the motion. Joe Reitman asked to amend the Agenda as follows: under New Business include item "B" Resolution for Fire Service District and Carol Witcher then asked to add item "C" Tree City; Motion made to approve the agenda with the amendments; Wayne Dimsdale made a motion to approve the agenda with the amendments; Carol Witcher seconded the motion, opportunity for discussion, motion passed, unanimous.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**VI. MINUTES APPROVAL: February 9, 2016 City Council Meeting**

Wayne Dimsdale made a motion to approve the Minutes for February 9, 2017 as presented; Carol Witcher seconded the motion, opportunity for discussion, motion passed, unanimous.

**VII. PUBLIC WORKS REPORT**

Presented by Alan Barton, Public Works Director

Our Department is getting ready for spring and grass cutting. At the Walnut Grove High School roundabout we planted grass and sewed wild flowers in with the grass. The school later came out and planted some bushes in the round about. There was discussion about the condition of equipment. We have some sidewalks that need to be patched. Mayor Lee explained to the Council we will need a crosswalk from the sidewalk to the Park entrance. There was discussion about how to pay for the crosswalk and be in compliance with the State in how it looked. Several grants were discussed for

possibilities for financing. Carol Witcher asked if there were any other major repairs needed. Several city street conditions were discussed and what it might take to pave or repair them. There is SPLOST money designated for sidewalks. Alan Barton explained one section without a sidewalk that would be the most needed would be from Waffle House to the lower side of the daycare located on Old Hwy 138. Carol Witcher suggested the Council look at alternative ways to find financing. Alan Barton also reported the State will soon have to do some work on Hwy 81, the section between City Hall and Hwy 138. Also there is a place that is sunk in on the side of the road at a culvert that will need to be fixed. Joe Reitman asked how hard it would be to run the linear distance and then take the feet of the road width to get the actual square feet of roadway needing to be resurfaced. Then you could crunch the numbers and see how much it would cost for repaving. Alan Barton agreed to get the numbers and bring back to the Council next month.

#### **VIII. FINANCIAL REPORT**

Financial Report was given by the City Clerk, Katherine Glass. The Mayor asked Joe Reitman to address the status of the Sewer Plant. It was reported Walton County is pulling out of the Sewer Plant with Walnut Grove. The County will phase out gradually over a period of five years. They will give complete operational control and responsibility including the monthly sewer note to the City of Walnut Grove. I just received some concrete numbers this week. When we get a final copy we will get packets to the Council. The plus side is Walton County helped put money in on the front end and got the plant in there and helped to support the City in getting a loan. That's a real positive. The down side is they will phase out after five years and then the City will have to shoulder that monthly payment. There was discussion about the amount the County would be paying over the next five years and what the expenses would be to the City. This is not a done deal until we sign the agreement. There was also discussion about annexing more property into the City. There was discussion about who might be interested in hooking onto the new sewer system. With all the rock in Walnut Grove any residential home with septic tank problems would likely desire to hook up the sewer system. The County's new fire department will be hooked on too. The question still comes back to how will you pay the costs at the Sewer Plant until you can get customers hooked up and paying? Alan Barton shared an idea for income. It will need more research but a lot of independent contractors that empty septic tanks are allowed to empty at city sewage plants for a fee. One I spoke with had a full truck and nowhere to empty it. The cities only can take so much a day. Since we don't have any customers we could take these customers to bring in revenue. They pay about \$250.00 per load. Some of these trucks are driving to Lithonia or Madison to dump their trucks. The Council asked Alan to do more research on this matter and report back to the Council. Wayne Dimsdale made a motion to approve the Financial Report as presented; Kathy Dimsdale seconded the motion, opportunity for discussion, motion passed, unanimous.

#### **IX. CLERK'S REPORT**

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

#### **X. CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT**

Code Enforcement Officer Craig Ellington not present tonight.

**XI. MAYOR'S REPORT**

We have covered everything already about the Sewer Plant.

**XII. OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Status on Wastewater Proclamation  
Already discussed

**XIII. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Invoice from Uncle Remus for the Walnut Grove Library**

Mayor Lee stated he wants to look at the contract with the Library. Joe Reitman says after an election the library contract can be revisited. We are locked in this year and the amount they asked for is what the City budgeted for. Wayne Dimsdale made a motion to pay the invoice for \$49,900.00 to Uncle Remus; seconded by Carol Witcher, opportunity for discussion, motion passed, unanimous.

**b. Resolution Special Fire Service District**

Joe Reitman read sections from the resolution regarding the Special Fire Service District. Our City along with other cities who do not have a fire department will be paying taxes for fire services. Cities that do have a city fire department would not pay for these services. This is a tax that has been assessed all along but now this will be a line item on your property taxes so an individual can see what they pay for fire protection. Wayne Dimsdale made a motion we approve the resolution for Special Fire Service District; Kathy Dimsdale seconded the motion, opportunity for discussion, motion passed, unanimous.

**c. Tree City**

Carol Witcher stated we didn't have an Arbor Day Celebration in 2016 due to weather. Bud Burhl, retiree from the Georgia Forestry Commission, contacted her and asked her about the City of Walnut Grove being a Tree City. There are advantages to being a Tree City some of which would be grant monies. She explained what it would take to become a Tree City. We would have a managed program with Bud Burhl and Seth Hawkins, the forest ranger in our area. We would need to have a proclamation and an Arbor Day Celebration. We need to have a celebration with maybe a visit from Smokey the Bear. Citizens would have an opportunity to take a seedling home to plant in their yard. The Council decided to have Alan Barton purchase Crepe Myrtles and plant them on the Parkway. Wayne Dimsdale made a motion we go through the process to be a Tree City; Kathy Dimsdale seconded the motion, opportunity for discussion, motion passed, unanimous. Carol Witcher asked the Council what date they would like to do an Arbor Day. Saturday April 8<sup>th</sup> was decided on. There was discussion about what time and the location. It was decided to let Alan Barton and his crew purchase/get trees from the forestry and plant them on the Parkway. On Saturday April 8<sup>th</sup> there will be a dedication ceremony. There was discussion about what kind of trees to plant. Dogwoods and Crepe Myrtle were suggested. Carol Witcher advised she gets a newsletter from the Forestry and they have no trees at the present time. It was discussed we would purchase the trees locally here in Walton County. It was decided Sonya Cox would check with her husband who works for the Forestry Department to see what if any trees are available. Wayne Dimsdale made a motion to allow the Mayor and Carol Witcher make a decision on the type

trees and purchase them to be planted by Alan Barton; Kathy Dimsdale seconded the motion, opportunity for discussion, motion passed, unanimous.

**XIV. DISCUSSION ITEM**

None

**XIV. COUNCIL COMMENTS**

None

Wayne Dimsdale made a motion to adjourn, Kathy Dimsdale seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.**

Approved by the Mayor and Council this \_\_\_\_\_ day of April, 2017.

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Mayor Lamar Lee

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Katherine A. Glass