

MINUTES OF THE WASHINGTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING
October 14, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.
Edward B. Pope Conference Center

The mayor and City Council of the City of Washington, Georgia, held the regular monthly meeting on Monday, October 14, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. at the Edward B. Pope Conference Center. Councilmembers present were Anderson, Cullars, Fisher, Gunter, Hill, and Mahoney.

Mayor Bailey presided. The mayor called the meeting to order, led the invocation, and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilman Anderson moved to approve the September 9th regular meeting minutes, the September 27th emergency post-Hurricane Helene called meeting minutes, and the October 4th meeting minutes. Seconded by Councilman Fisher. Discussion: Councilman Cullars wanted to add to the October 4th meeting that the lawyer was not present and had to be called to provide legal input into negotiating the dispersing of the ARPA funds, and the motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Approval:

Councilman Anderson motioned to approve. Councilman Gunter, Second. Discussion: Councilman Cullars items (Housing Authority and Cost) will be discussed under City Administrator items. Valente Fanning will be removed as he is out of town, and the motion passed unanimously.

Citizens Comment:

Angela Booker. Discussed and asked why FEMA did not list Wilkes County as a disaster area.

Kathy Agan. Discussed the Animal Shelter needs.

Alvin Jones. Discussed why the Housing Authority was being asked for information.

Roger Harper. Discussed why the city could not get solar power into the city.

Committee/Boards/Authorities Reports:

Community Development Director – Looking into finding ways to fund an after-school program.

WCCP – Will be asking for more funds this upcoming year to help support their activities

The Economic Development/Main Street Director - Brought a variety of handouts on upcoming events in the city and left them on the table for citizens.

City Attorney Action Items:

- a. Charter Amendment Second Reading – Elected Officials Travel Policy
Councilman Cullars made the motion, and Councilman Fisher made the second. Discussion: The City Attorney reminded the council that this is just changing the ordinance. We can write the policy and set our limits on how much each councilman gets to spend per year. Vote by name: Fisher-Yes, Hill-Yes, Gunter-Yes, Cullars-Yes, Anderson-Yes, Mahoney-Yes. Passed unanimously.
- b. Citizens Ethics Panel ordinance reading
Councilman Anderson made the motion, and Councilman Gunter made the second. Discussion: Other cities and counties have a similar citizen review committee process and have received

positive feedback that it's worked fine. Training in ethics guidelines, possibly with GMA, is recommended for the board. Compensation was discussed but is not a part of the motion. The motion before this body by Councilman Anderson is to approve a resolution amending the ethics code procedure for the City of Washington, adding a provision for creating a board of ethics, second by Councilman Gunter—vote by name: Fisher-Yes, Hill-No, Gunter-Yes, Cullars-Yes, Anderson-Yes, Mahoney-Yes. 5 yes 1 No. Approved.

Acting City Administrator Action Items:

- a. Hurricane Helene brief / Emergency Funds progress
Motion by Councilman Hill that we move forward with dispensing funds (ARPA account), second by Councilman Fisher. Call for vote: Fisher-Yes, Hill-Yes, Gunter-Yes, Cullars-No, Anderson-Yes, Mahoney-Yes. 5-Yes 1-No.
- b. Employee engagement by mayor and council (Sec. 2-70(c)).
The City Administrator is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the city and is the general supervisor of all city employees. Any department head may confer with the mayor or their respective council committee members; however, neither the mayor, the council, nor any member thereof shall give orders to any City Administrator subordinate, publicly or privately.
- c. HR/Administrative Assistant and Asset/Fleet Management position. The HR/Administrative position has already been advertised and will be filled when the city hires a City Administrator. No action was taken regarding the asset/fleet management position.
- d. Loan repayment for various current loans: Councilman Mahoney motioned to pay the loans discussed once funds are reviewed and approved, second by Councilman Fisher. Discussion: Loans to be paid off are in the amount of \$537,947.23. Call for a vote: Fisher-Yes, Hill-No, Gunter-Yes, Cullars-No, Anderson-Yes, Mahoney-Yes. 4 yes 2 No. Approved.
- e. Life & Health Insurance (GMA Quote). The quote from GMA offered the employees affordable insurance at an affordable rate. POS Health Plans with co-pays instead of a plan where you must meet a \$5,000 deductible before the plan pays. Motion to accept GMA Life & Insurance Quote by Councilman Mahoney, second by Councilman Gunter. Discussion: Call for a vote: Fisher-Yes, Hill-Yes, Gunter-Yes, Cullars-Yes, Mahoney-Yes, Anderson-Yes. Passed Unanimously.
- f. Official updating of City Holidays (adding Juneteenth, Columbus, and Veterans Day) in the policy and procedure manual. Motion to add these holidays by Councilman Fisher, second Councilman Hill. Discussion. Call for a vote: Fisher-Yes, Hill-Yes, Gunter-Yes, Cullars-Yes, Mahoney-Yes, Anderson-Yes. Passed Unanimously.
- g. Employee fishing and hunting on city ponds. Reinstating that employees may fish and hunt on city property and ponds. The motion was made by Councilman Mahoney, and Councilman Fisher made the second. Discussion: Call for a vote: Fisher-Yes, Hill-Yes, Gunter-Yes, Cullars-Yes, Mahoney-Yes, Anderson-Yes. Passed Unanimously.
- h. Millage rate for 2024. Councilman Cullars made the motion, and Councilman Hill made the second. Discussion: The possibility of raising the millage rate for infrastructure purposes was discussed, but it was decided to go ahead and advertise the five-year history at 8.068 mils and get our budget numbers in early next year so that a better assessment can be done on what the

city may need for infrastructure. Motioned by Councilman Mahoney, second by Fisher. Call for a vote: Fisher-Yes, Hill-Yes, Gunter-Yes, Cullars-Yes, Mahoney-Yes, Anderson-Yes. Passed Unanimously.

- i. Salary study proposal bids – Tabled
- j. After-school Program (Community Development 2025): Crystal Martin spoke about collaborating with Parks & Recreation Staff and other entities to jumpstart an After-school program on January 1, 2025.
- k. Election Cost – Total cost for the election is \$8,000

Council Members Discussion:

A. Councilman Cullars:

- Municipal Court Solicitor – The City is currently advertising for this position
- Assistant Clerk Position—This title was added to the Code Enforcement Officer position to assist the City Clerk with her duties only.
- Asst. Admin Position – This position will be HR/Executive Assistant
- Cross Training—Admin employees will be cross-trained to perform other duties within this department (taxes, Alcohol licenses, billing, setting up accounts, tax sales, etc.).
- Salary Employees Overtime—Sec. 18. Attendance and Leave 3. Employees classified under the FLSA are ineligible for overtime pay but may receive Flex Time (CT) as prescribed in this policy manual.

B. Councilman Mahoney:

- Emergency Management Plan and Assessments
- CTAE Partnerships – tabled
- Employee Christmas Party- The request for the Employee Christmas Party never came before the council.

C. Councilman Gunter:

1. Community Events and lack of participation in representation within the community

Council Members' Action Items:

a. Councilman Hill:

1. Emergency Management Plan and Assessments—I commend those responsible for checking on their neighbors, our EMS system, our fire department, the public works department, etc., and ensuring generators and other emergency equipment are working. Discussion on what it takes to open and run a shelter.
2. HR Department- Motion made for HR Department, no second. Motion dies.

b. Councilman Gunter:

1. Motion for a budget increase for the animal shelter—Newt Gunter moved to give \$30,000 to the animal shelter to get them through the end of the year. Second by Councilman Anderson. Discussion: A budget for the Animal Shelter will have to be brought before the mayor and council next year to determine the amount they will be given. Call for a vote: Fisher-Yes, Hill-Yes, Mahoney-Yes, Cullars-Yes, Gunter-Yes, Anderson-Yes. Passed unanimously.

c. Councilman Anderson:

1. Motion for City Administrator- Motion made by Councilman Anderson to authorize the mayor to execute a written agreement with Mr. Long to serve as City Administrator subject to the approval of the agreement by the City Attorney. The contract would be negotiated with the appropriate terms. And did you want to put a figure? I think a figure is part of the negotiation and the contract. And this doesn't have to be in this motion, but it will be, as that's why it says this about the agreement of the city attorney, with a codified contract that spells out all those details. Second by Councilman Fisher. Discussion: Concerned about hiring someone who is not qualified for the position. Councilman Hill inquired about going into the executive session, and the mayor reiterated that he wanted to make sure if he did or did not want to make a motion to move into the executive session and responded no. Call for a vote: Fisher-Yes, Hill-No, Gunter-Yes, Cullars-No, Mahoney-No, Anderson-Yes. 3-Yes 3-No Mayor – Yes. Passed 4 – Yes, 3-No.

The motion was made by Councilman Anderson to adjourn; Councilman Fisher seconded. Motion passed.



Bruce A. Bailey, Mayor



Yoshe T. Jenkins, City Clerk

