

**REGULAR MEETING**  
**May 13, 2024**

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Washington, Georgia, held their regular monthly meeting on Monday, May 13, 2024, 6 PM at the Pope Conference Center. Mayor Bruce Bailey presided.

Present were Mayor Bailey, City Administrator, Jerry deBin, Council members, Anderson, Cullars, Fisher, Gunter, Hill, and Mahoney.

Pastor Hill led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MINUTES APPROVED**

Council members reviewed the minutes and requested amending to remove the reference to interpretation of travel reimbursement procedures. Motion by \_\_\_\_\_ and second by \_\_\_\_\_ to adopt minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

**AGENDA APPROVED**

On motion by Fisher, second by Hill, the council approved unanimously.

**COUNCIL DISCUSSION TOPICS**

**Electric Committee Recommendations:** Committee members presented a series of proposed changes to existing utility policies. Mayor Bailey, Councilmembers, and City Administrator discussed the city's commitment to balance policy enforcement with compassion for residents who experience financial hardship. Discussion led to several policy changes, while ensuring the senior exempt policy remains intact. Proposed changes include:

- **Refund Original Deposit:** Refund the original security deposit for each residential customer who pays the city utility bill on time (by the 15<sup>th</sup>) for 12 consecutive months starting May 2023. Refund to be applied to the customers' monthly utility bill as quickly as feasible to implement within the city's billing program.
- **Eliminate Additional Deposit:** Eliminate the policy that requires an additional security deposit (\$150/250/350) to reconnect each time an account reaches cutoff status.
- **Non-Refundable Penalty:** Increase the non-refundable cutoff penalty from \$55 to \$150. Recommend 90-day trial period and then reassess.

**COUNCIL ACTION TOPICS**

Motion by \_\_\_\_\_; second by \_\_\_\_\_ to eliminate the \$55 cutoff penalty. After much discussion, the motion was amended to eliminate the additional security deposit (e.g. \$150, \$250, \$350) applied when a delinquent account reached cutoff status; and to instead apply a non-refundable \$150 cutoff status penalty each time service is disconnected due to non-payment. Motion passed unanimously.

**FURTHER COUNCIL DISCUSSION TOPICS**

1. **Traffic and Infrastructure:** Discussed ways to address speeding on Liberty Street such as adding a four-way stop at Allison Street and West Liberty. Also discussed ideas for new sidewalks for safer pedestrian access to Simpson Park.
2. **Recreational Improvements:** Mayor, Councilmembers, and City Administrator gave updates on city recreational facilities including the new splash pad, plans for

playground equipment, and plans for construction of a new tennis/pickleball court at Simpson Park.

3. **Swimming Pool:** Discussion on the Reese Booker Pool summer schedule; updates on potential candidates for lifeguard certification.

4. **Juneteenth Celebrations:** Overview of multiple Juneteenth events hosted by the city and local non-governmental organizations, highlighting cultural performances, festivities, and community engagement.

#### **CITY ADMINISTRATOR TOPICS**

1. **Street Renaming:** City Administrator reported that surveys of property tenants and owners were complete, and 100% support renaming Persimmon Pkwy to become Jeff Hackney Drive. Motion by Fisher; Second by Mahoney. Motion passed unanimously.

2. **Community Event Calendar:** The shareable community calendar is now live on the city's website. This is intended to help promote community-wide events.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A motion was made by Hill and seconded by Cullars to hold an executive session. Motion passed unanimously. The Executive session ended at 8:30 p.m. with Adam Nelson stating that two personnel matters and one litigation matter were discussed. No action was taken.

Motion by Mahoney to adjourn and second by Gunter, vote unanimously passed and the meeting adjourned.

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Bruce Bailey, Mayor

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Debbie Bazemore, City Clerk