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Minutes for the special called City Council meeting on November 22, 1997
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING CITY COUNCIL MINUTES - NOVEMBER 22, 1997

The Jonesboro City Council met in a special called meeting Monday, November 22, 1997, at 8:30 a.m. A full quorum was in attendance. Present were: Mayor Brodell, City Clerk, Donna K. Jackson, City Attorney, Phillip Crego and 9 council members. Those members were: Rorex, Davis, Tate, Rega, Pratt, Young, Fletcher, Bowers, and Roddy.

Councilman Fletcher moved, seconded by Councilman Young for the adoption of a resolution to amend the Employee Handbook by replacing the “Employee’s Birthday” with the day after Thanksgiving effective January 1, 1998. A voice vote was taken resulting in all council members voting aye with the exception of Councilman Rorex who voted nay. Those council members voting aye were: Davis, Tate, Rega, Pratt, Young, Fletcher, Bowers, and Roddy. The resolution was assigned number 1997:78.

Councilman Pratt moved, seconded by Councilman Fletcher for the adoption of a resolution setting a public hearing for 6:15 p.m. on December 1, 1997 for the purpose of moving an easement. A voice vote was taken resulting in all council members voting aye. Those council members voting aye were: Rorex, Davis, Tate, Rega, Pratt, Young, Fletcher, Bowers, and Roddy. The resolution was assigned number 1997:79.

Councilman Bowers moved, seconded by Councilman Pratt to adjourn and go into the Finance Committee meeting. A voice vote was taken resulting in all council members voting aye. Those council members voting aye were: Rorex, Davis, Tate, Rega, Pratt, Young, Fletcher, Bowers, and Roddy.

The 1998 budget was discussed after the meeting. Councilman Young, Chairman of the Finance Committee explained the meeting was set in an effort to discuss the budget because several committees had not had an opportunity to meet, and since time was a factor, it would be easier to meet at one time rather than have numerous meetings. The following budgets were discussed:

ADMINISTRATION - The first budget to be discussed was the Administration Budget. Chairman Young read each line item. Councilman Davis questioned why line item 514 (Transfer of Funds - \$4,800.00) was not

included in the 1998 budget. Mr. Larry Flowers, Finance Director stated he was not sure what the funds were for. Councilman Davis (a previous finance director) stated the \$4,800.00 was transferred from the parking meter fund to the general fund as revenue to compensate payroll costs and administrative costs from the parking meter budget.

POLICE - Chairman Young read each line item. Councilman Rorex questioned why a \$23,474.00 increase in line item 203 Group Insurance. Mayor Brodell stated it was due to a rate increase. Chairman Young stated there would be a ten (10) to twelve (12) percent increase in premiums with the \$23,474.00 representing twelve (12) percent. Councilman Rorex also questioned why some departments went down in line item 279 Unemployment/WKMS. COMP, and why some went up. Mayor Brodell stated it was because it is based on an overall average cost out (by department, not city wide). Mr. Flowers stated both line items 203 and 279 are based on experience and will fluctuate. Councilman Pratt questioned why line item 201 Salaries was not being reflected in the budget. Mayor Brodell stated they have not passed them and it would have to be added to the budget. Councilman Young stated recommendations for salary increases would be taken after going through the budgets, and requested Mr. Michael Beeman to comment about the Salary Administration Plan. Councilman Pratt questioned if it would be done today. Chairman Young stated if there was enough time left. Councilman Davis asked for clarification on line item 229 Jail Fees which increased by \$200,000.00. Mayor Brodell stated Judge Honeycutt is sending more people to jail and is reflecting in Jail Fees. Judge Honeycutt stated according to her figures the amount was up \$100,000.00 not \$200,000.00. Mayor Brodell stated based on projections from the last four months the amount could average \$45,000.00 a month. Judge Honeycutt stated she predicts a decrease in arrests because previously people had not been arrested for failure to pay their fines, and contributed the increase in arrests due to the ten to fifteen year backlog. Councilman Young stated for 1997 there was a 37% increase in jail fees and the increase for 1998 over what 1997 experience has been, is only 15%, roughly half the increase in 1997 jail fees.

FIRE - Chairman Young stated the Operating Budget containing a \$42,540 increase does not reflect the Capital Expenditure of one million dollars for the new fire station. Councilman Rega discovered the budgets were not identical. Some members had a revised version of the budgets, others did not. The Finance Committee broke temporarily to make copies of the correct budget. Once the Finance Committee was called back to order, Chairman Young explained that two years ago it was determined how the budget process would be handled. It was stated the established process was that the department head would prepare their budget and go through it with the Mayor, make any revisions, then the revised budget would be reviewed by the Finance Committee, and finally the Council would vote on the final draft of the budget. Councilman Rorex recommended an amendment to the Fire Budget, by adding three firemen to the salary list and to take out \$24,000.00 out of fixed assets for a heat imaging machine, use the other \$ 42, 000 (which was taken out) to finance the other two positions. Discussion followed with Mayor Brodell stating the Fire Chief specifically asked for the heat imaging machine and Councilman Rorex stating the Fire Chief said he would rather have the extra help. Councilman Kelton, Chairman of the Fire Committee stated he was not aware the Fire Chief would rather have the extra help, and so he recommended a Fire Committee meeting to discuss the matter.

CEMETERY - Councilman Rorex questioned if the City contracts the opening of the graves. Mayor Brodell explained we do everything, nothing is contracted out, and the revenue is put in perpetual care fund.

INSPECTION - Salary increase of \$21,328.00 for a new code enforcement officer. Fixed Assets increase of \$23,000.00 for a new vehicle and other things. Overall \$60,031.00 increase. The last two pages of the budget lists capital expenditures: \$15,000.00 for a pickup, \$7,000.00 for a copier, \$3,000.00 for radios and three office chairs. Councilman Rorex questioned if they could justify hand held radios. Mayor Brodell explained they are away from their vehicles, out on a job, and depending on the circumstances confrontation can occur.

ANIMAL CONTROL - Councilman Pratt, Chairman of the Animal Control Committee, stated he would like for the staff to have one more hand held radio for the same reasons as the Inspection Department. Also, Councilman Pratt questioned why two animal control employees were picking up euthanasia dogs for the Humane Society and the Animal Medical Center on Gee Street. Councilman Pratt stated it was costing approximately \$4,000.00 a year to provide this service. He reported the Humane Society had killed 788 through the first of October, 1997, and the Animal Medical Center had killed 2100. Councilman Davis explained if the Humane Society or the Animal Medical Center turned a live dog over to the Dog Pound the City would have to pay for the euthanasia. Councilman Young recommended the Animal Control Committee research this matter and make recommendations after the first of the year, so if need be money could be appropriated.

CITY CLERK - Councilman Young reported the Finance Committee had met previously on the Clerk's Budget and recommended a salary increase of \$1325.00 with no change in operational expenses. \$1300.00 was left in Professional Services (Line Item 217) for a part-time ASU Student through a federally funded work study program. Councilman Pratt questioned if the \$1300.00 was limited to an ASU student. Councilman Young stated it was not limited to an ASU student, however \$1300.00 would not fund a part-time employee. City Clerk, Donna Jackson stated one goal for her office was to try and improve the way city records are kept. Earlier in the year Mrs. Jackson had met with the Personnel Committee and showed a video of different storage areas containing city documents. It was explained that housing the records was not enough, but rather maintenance was needed, with a centralized location and one person responsible for the records. Councilman Young recommended appointing a committee (Task Force) responsible for working with the Clerk to determine what kind of control, maintenance and software is needed for city records.

CITY ATTORNEY - Councilman Young explained the part-time salary was moved to Professional Services Line Item. City Attorney, Phillip Crego explained he had been told by the Finance Department that part-time salaries should be listed under Professional Services. Mayor Brodell stated no money was budgeted for outside legal fees, and Mr. Crego may have to come back to Council for additional help later in the year. There was a \$2,889.00 increase in the overall budget.

PLANNING - \$2,747.00 decrease in the overall budget. Mayor Brodell explained the Planning Department had been separated from the Inspection Department and was in the 1997 budget but was not used except for part-time salaries. He further explained since the Land Use Plan has been adopted, Jonesboro will be hiring a City Planner as soon as the codes and ordinances are adopted. Councilman Rorex questioned why the Misc. Line Item was so high (\$1,000.00). Mayor Brodell explained because it is a newly formed department and the office needs were indeterminate.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS - Decrease in Salaries by \$10,000.00 - Marc Miles, Director for Information Systems explained the Department had been using a part-time employee, and by increasing his hours they were able to do away with a full-time position. It was explained the part-time employee's parents would not allow him to work full-time. Increase in Expenses by \$5,500.00 - Mayor Brodell explained this was for extensive training. Councilman Bowers questioned a change in amounts for line item 201 (Salaries). In the 1996 budget it was \$86,542.00 in 1997 it was \$93,464.00, however in the 1998 budget the amount shown for the previous year (1997) it was listed as \$86,564.00 with a decrease for 1998 in the amount of \$76,072.00. Marc Miles explained earlier in the year (July of 1997) money was transferred from Salaries to another line time. Councilman Pratt questioned if a long-range plan was in place to upgrade our computer system. Mr. Miles stated that is why the fixed assets and software line items showed an increase for 1998. Councilman Pratt asked for a fixed asset list from Information Systems because one had not been provided. Mayor Brodell explained if we build a new fire station, new computer equipment will be needed. Mr. Miles explained Outside Maintenance would be used to upgrade existing computer stations for different departments. Councilman Davis stated he had requested a current inventory list of all hardware and software so Council may review it and understand what is needed for

this department. Councilman Young recommended a Task Force be appointed (like the one for the City Clerk's Office) to review long-range planning for computer systems. Councilman Pratt stated he would like to see one data base which would tie all information together. Councilman Young announced a \$24,000.00 increase in the Information Systems Budget. Councilman Rorex questioned Mr. Miles about computer problems in Municipal Judges Office (using two computers). It was explained as recent as a month ago the problem of having to shut down one computer system to use another computer system, was solved. However, the Judges Office is still having to use two separate computer systems. Councilman Rega stated when Mr. Miles was asked to take the position as Director of Information Systems some commitments were made regarding salary, and Councilman Rega wanted to make sure those commitments were met. Mayor Brodell stated Mr. Miles salary would need to be considered in this budget at the appropriate time.

HUMANE RESOURCES - \$211.00 increase overall. No other changes in the budget.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE - \$5,300.00 decrease overall.

POLICE TRAINING - \$14,000.00 increase in Fixed Assets.

POLICE WORK RELEASE - \$20,000.00 increase in Fixed Assets. (For a 15 passenger Van)

FIRE (ACT 833) - \$ 72,000.00 increase in Misc. - Insurance Premiums (Turn-Back money) Councilman Davis inquired as to why the \$72,000.00 was listed under Miscellaneous. Mayor Brodell provided him with a list of items to be purchased with the \$72,000.00 Misc. Line Item.

POLICE AND FIRE PENSION - Increase in City contributions: Police Pension \$205,000.00, on Operations increase of \$220,000.00 - Fire Pension Plan was increased \$225,000.00

POLICE STEP GRANT - \$8,000.00 Increase.

GENERAL FUND, OUTSIDE AGENCIES EXPENDITURES - Senior Citizen Center (Same as last year), Crowley's Ridge Development Counsel \$2,780.00, East Arkansas Planning and Development \$1200.00, Emergency Services (No Change), Industrial Development \$100,000.00, Airport Improvements \$35,000.00, Flight Station Maintenance (FAA a twenty year contract) \$5,000.00, Land Use Plan Contract (No Change). Forum \$5,000.00 increase for repairs, Outside Attorney Fees (No Change), Conservation (No Change), Tornado Siren showed a decrease, Senior Citizens Building showed a \$3,000.00 increase for repairs, MATA Committee (No Change). Overall there was an increase of about \$17,000.00 in Outside Agencies. Mr. Larry Fugate inquired about the final bill on the census, and Mayor Brodell said we had never been provided itemization for the census.

MUNICIPAL COURT - \$60,000.00 Increase - Councilman Young stated the Finance Committee was not finished looking over this budget, and a meeting had been scheduled with the County Judge.

SALES TAX REVENUE - Streets - Anticipation of \$115,000.00 increase from State Turn Back Funds. \$20,000.00 in Interest earned, Decrease in Miscellaneous Expense, \$15,000.00 increase in County Road Tax, \$100,000 per year for the next three years on the street signalization, but then the City must assume the cost. Overall revenue expecting a decrease of \$603,000.00. Councilman Rorex asked for the total Sales Tax Figure. He was told it was \$6,500,000.00. Mayor Brodell stated Sales Tax was \$176,000.00 as of October, and that figure is down compared to recent years. He explained in all probability an Act would be introduced that would do away with taxes on food and property, and should the Act be adopted, it would cut turn back money by a minimum of 25%.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned