

**MINUTES
COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 19, 2017
7:00 P.M.**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Council Meeting was called to order by Mayor Robert Bridges at 7:00pm.

Members present were Mayor Robert Bridges, Council Members Perry Barton, Gayle Steed, Betty Lyle, David Huth and Hattie Thrasher. Also in attendance was City Administrator, Michelle Irizarry, City Clerk, Mai Chang, City Attorney, Thomas Mitchell, Public Works Director, Sam Powell and Building & Code Enforcement Officer Randy Gordon. Media was represented by Ron Bridgeman of the Barrow Journal.

Mayor Bridges introduced Dr. Stephens from here in Statham that is with Northeast Georgia Physicians Group. He has been here for about 1 year. Dr. Stephens introduced himself and stated that he is happy here and it is a great place to be here. He encouraged people to go see him.

Mayor Bridges recognized and thanked Sam Powell for the picture of the “Eagle’s Landing” that Sam had provided to Mayor and Council earlier.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Council Meeting, August 15, 2017

Betty Lyle made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 15, 2017 Council meeting as written. Hattie Thrasher seconded the motion, unanimous.

Mayor Bridges thanked Betty Lyle for what she has done and Marvin Osborne for taking over the car show.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

A. No Old Business

4. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Pillar Award Recipient for Annual Mayor’s Association Dinner- Oct. 24th

Mayor Bridges stated that Donna Baker was nominated as a recipient in the Work Session and asked for more nominations but Donna was the only one presented.

Gayle Steed made motion to give Pillar Award to Donna Baker. Hattie Thrasher seconded the motion, unanimous.

B. Extra Supplemental Life Insurance Coverage for City Employees

Michelle Irizarry stated that this is an optional \$10,000 supplement life insurance coverage that cost \$.38/thousand dollars. Participation is 20% for employee or elected officials.

Gayle Steed made motion to provide the supplemental coverage to the employees. David Huth seconded the motion, unanimous.

C. GMEBS Life & Health Insurance Rate Increase 2018

City Clerk, Mai Chang stated that GMEBS insurance rate has increased for 2018. Two quotes have been requested and made recommendation that if these two quotes come in higher, than would have to stay with GMEBS.

Perry Barton made motion to set aside until then and wait for the two quotes. David Huth seconded the motion, unanimous.

D. Proposed Millage Rate for 2017 Property Tax

City Clerk, Mai Chang stated the proposed millage rate is a decrease this year from 5.133 to 4.917. It can not be adopted until next month due to information was just received.

Mayor Bridges stated that budget was reviewed and there will be some cuts in each department.

E. Resolution for the Alley Abandonment on 1771 Broad St.

City Attorney, Thomas Mitchell stated that there has been small alley issues in Statham. There is an alley sitting in part of this building and it appears that this alley was never opened and certainly never been accepted or worked on by the City. The resolution makes those statements. Barrow County was part of Jackson County then and he made recommendation for Council to adopt this resolution and then authorize Mayor to execute the Quit Claim Deed to clear the title.

Betty Lyle made motion to approve the resolution. Perry Barton seconded the motion, unanimous.

5. CITIZENS CONCERNS:

A. Kendra Sexton : Assist Citizens with Debris Cleanup from Irma

Kendra stated that she has two questions: she knows they pay a fee for the debris pickup and everybody is concerned and confused on where the policy is and what the specifications are and etc.

City Administrator, Michelle Irizarry read out the section on the specifications on the tree limb pick up from the ordinance.

Second question: IRMA storm; she stated she is disappointed in the attitude of the people in this town that people aren't going to help people. She understand that the prison inmates was to help with the beautification of Statham to cut grass, weed eat and etc. and she does not expect City to pick up where residents would cut their own debris. But due to the aftermath of a storm, why the City did not utilized the inmates to help the home owners to cut some of the stuff up to smaller pieces so that it can be picked up. She also stated some issues that was brought up due to IRMA into her yard. Questions and answers were exchanged by Council members. She stated that her point was neighbors helping neighbors.

B. Kelly Pickens : Storm Response by City (Absent)

C. Cheryl Aaron : Natural Disaster Clean Up and Audit Issues

Natural Disaster Clean Up: Cheryl stated that there was an incident on Broad Street that ended up with a resident being arrested and she won't go into details about it because there is a pending lawsuit coming the City's way. She stated that City needs a natural disaster plan and asked if there is anything like that? She has contacted the City of Bogart, Winder, and Watkinsville and none of them refused or charged their citizens for removing debris for this natural disaster. She stated that each home pays \$24 a year for debris removal (24,000 per 1,000 home). Her question was why is the City charging additional money for land pickup? She has been told that \$2 fee that was rolled into their water and sewer bill by some of the Council members. She stated that Governor Deal has approved natural disaster money in all 159 counties in State.

Mayor Bridges stated that City is not charging anything and she is wrong on this fee and charge. Betty Lyle mention it was a long time ago. Mayor Bridges acknowledged the state help.

Audit Issues: Cheryl stated she was a CFO of a non-profit that is audited yearly and has seen the email exchanges between the auditors and the City. She is more than applauded to find out there is significant missing cash-175000 with no documentations where money was spent which renders City un-auditable and it's unacceptable. The tax payers pay the highest millage rate in the State. She stated water rates were increased and permit fees were added. She stated to keep cutting the budget until it balance. She has been in contact with audit commission regarding a forensics audit. She stated that Police Department is costing a lot of money and she made motion to close the Police Dept.

Michelle stated the audit is in process with Hawkins & McNair. Mayor Bridges stated there is no money missing.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

None

7. ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Council, David Huth made a motion to adjourn. Hattie Thrasher seconded the motion, unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.