

MINUTES
City Council Meeting
Monday, June 15, 2015 – 7:00 p.m.

Call to Order: Mayor Holder welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Opening: Councilmember Campbell offered the opening prayer and Mayor Holder invited everyone to join in the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Roll Call:

Members: Mayor Holder presided. Council Members: Mayor Pro-tem George, Don Bethune, Bruce Campbell, Rosetta Cody, Marcia Daniel, and Kim Tice.

Staff: Ron Feldner, Interim City Manager; Rhonda Ferrell-Bowles, Clerk of Council; James P. Gerard, City Attorney; Ben Brengman, IT Director; Pam Franklin, HR Director; Ron Alexander, Building Safety Director; Blake Hodge, Fire Chief; Charles Draeger, Water Operations Director; David Lyons, Chief of Police; Benny Googe, Public Works Director and Cliff Ducey, Parks & Recreation Director.

Mayor Holder said City Council held a pre-agenda session prior to tonight's meeting. He said no decisions were made or votes taken during the pre-agenda session.

Informal Public Comment: Mayor Holder opened the floor to receive public comment from the audience. There being no questions or comments from the audience, Mayor Holder closed the informal public comment portion of the meeting.

Formal Public Comment:

Garden City Housing Team Update: Ms. Sharon Bethune presented to City Council an update on the summer projects with YouthWorks.

Mayor Holder presented to Ms. Bethune a plaque recognizing the Garden City Housing Teams efforts. He said on the plaque is the article the Savannah Morning Newspaper published on May 25, 2015 on the good work the Garden City Housing Team was doing in Garden City. Ms. Bethune thanked Mayor and City Council for their support of the Housing Team.

Public Hearing:

Alcoholic Beverage License Application for Cosmos Pizza LLC (DBA Maggie's): Mayor Holder opened the public hearing to receive public comment on an alcoholic beverage license application made by Dimitrios Petropoulos to sell wines, beer and/or malt beverages at Cosmos Pizza, LLC (DBA Maggie's), 1452 Dean Forest Road, Garden City, Georgia.

Mayor Holder asked if anyone had any questions or comments regarding the application. There being no questions or comments, Mayor Holder closed the public hearing.

City Council Minutes:

Upon motion by Councilmember Bethune, seconded by Councilmember George, City Council voted unanimously to approve the city council minutes dated 6/1/15 and workshop synopsis dated 6/8/15.

Staff Reports:

Planning, Zoning & Building Director presented the Planning, Zoning & Building Department's Monthly Status Report.

Water Operations Director presented the Water Operations Department's Monthly Status Report.

Chief of Police presented the Police Department's Monthly Status Report.

Chief Lyons said this afternoon we arrested the suspects that were committing auto break-ins. He said also I recently traveled to the Republic of Georgia with the State Department as part of an Advisory Group.

Councilmember Bethune said I like the way you are breaking down the crime statistics in your report. He said I have also received several comments from residents that they are seeing increased patrol in their area.

Councilmember Tice said I would like to thank you for serving on the committee about the semi-trucks. She said it was on the news that the Governor is supplying additional police officers to patrol the highway with regard to semi-trucks.

Chief Lyons said the majority of the additional officers will be in southeast Georgia. He said if we were allowed to do commercial vehicles we would be able to free up some of the officers so they could better focus on the interstate corridors. He said my issues have been with those semi-truckers that don't go on the interstate.

Councilmember Daniel said I recently toured our Police Department and I was very impressed with what I saw. She said the Chief and his officers have done a lot of proactive things in regards to things that are going on throughout the Country.

Chief Lyons said after Ferguson, we had participated in the training course for Fair & Impartial Policing.

Fire Chief presented the Fire Department's Monthly Status Report.

City Manager Update:

City Manager said the IT Director will conduct a computer class at the Senior Center on June 17 and a similar computer class at the Cooper Center on June 24.

Councilmember Bethune asked the City Manager to check with the County to see if the policies have changed at the Sharon Park Landfill, because it is his understanding that you can't dump construction materials. He said people are having to take construction materials to the Chevis Road Landfill.

Items for Consideration:

Resolution – 2015 Ad Valorem Tax Rate: A resolution of the Mayor and Council of Garden City, Georgia to set the ad valorem tax rate of Garden City at 3.883 mills for fiscal year 2015.

Councilmember Bethune asked the City Manager to tell why the millage rate was lower.

City Manager said the tax digest grew approximately 7%. He said we had to roll back the millage rate to remain status quo.

Mayor Holder asked if there was anyone in the audience that wished to address City Council on the proposed ad valorem rate.

Ms. Misty Selph, Woodlawn Avenue, said over the past year you have had an opportunity to spend the tax payer's money wisely. She said some of the tax money has been spent on public safety, however, I have not seen any going into recreation. She said I would like to see a soccer field as well as better recreation facilities. She said also Chatham Parkway needs to be resurfaced as well as Highway 80. She said employee raises are great, as well as police cars and fire equipment, but there are also other areas for the tax payer's money to be spent.

Mayor Holder asked if anyone else wished to address Council on the proposed ad valorem rate. Mayor Holder said there being no further questions or comments, I'll call for a motion.

Upon motion by Councilmember Bethune, seconded by Councilmember Daniel, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the resolution to set the ad valorem tax rate at 3.883 mills for fiscal year 2015.

Resolution – City Classification & Compensation Plan: Clerk of Council read a resolution to establish salary ranges for job classifications and to authorize salary adjustments for employees currently being paid less than minimum pay established for his/her position.

City Manager said our policy calls for the review of the pay scale every 36 months. He said the last pay scale study was done in-house in 2012, but this time we outsourced the study.

Upon motion by Councilmember Bethune, seconded by Councilmember George, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the resolution.

Resolution – Annual Merit Salary Increases: Clerk of Council read a resolution to authorize annual merit salary increases for employees in furtherance of the City's compensation philosophy to provide for career and salary growth based on performance measured by a fair and effective evaluation system.

Upon motion by Councilmember Bethune, seconded by Councilmember George, City Council voted unanimously to table for further study the resolution to authorize annual merit salary increases for employees.

Resolution – Pension Plan Upgrade: Clerk of Council read a resolution to modify the City's Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System (GMEBS) defined benefit retirement plan for the purpose of providing for normal retirement at age fifty-five (55) with twenty (20) years of service.

City Manager said the City has a more traditional retirement plan that provides for retirement at age 65. He said the City is enhancing the plan to provide for retirement at age 55 with 20 years of service. He said this will encourage the employees to stay with the City. He said the benefit enhancement will require employees to contribute 2.5% of their earnings to the pension plan, with the City contributing an amount equating to approximately 10.80% of its payroll effective January 1, 2016.

Councilmember Bethune said the upgrade was prompted by public safety, but it would be unfair not to include all employees in the plan.

Upon motion by Councilmember George, seconded by Councilmember Campbell, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the pension plan upgrade resolution.

Resolution – City Council Summer Meeting Schedule: Clerk of Council read a resolution to amend the regular meeting schedule of the Garden City Council for the period of July 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 as follows:

Regularly Scheduled Meeting	July 6, 2015	Canceled
Regularly Scheduled Meeting	July 20, 2015	Affirmed
Regularly Scheduled Meeting	August 3, 2015	Canceled
Regularly Scheduled Meeting	August 17, 2015	Affirmed
Regularly Scheduled Meeting	September 7, 2015	Canceled
Regularly Scheduled Meeting	September 21, 2015	Affirmed

Upon motion by Councilmember Campbell, seconded by Councilmember Cody, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the resolution amending the regular meeting schedule of the Garden City Council for the period of July 1 through September 30, 2015.

Alcoholic Beverage License Application for Cosmos Pizza LLC (formerly Maggie’s): Mayor Holder said we have for consideration of an alcoholic beverage license application made by Dimitrios Petropoulos to sell wines, beer and/or malt beverages at Cosmos Pizza, LLC (DBA Maggie’s), 1452 Dean Forest Road, Garden City, Georgia.

Upon motion by Councilmember Bethune, seconded by Councilmember Campbell, City Council voted unanimously to approve the alcoholic beverage license application by Dimitrios Petropoulos.

Adjournment: Upon motion by Mayor Holder, seconded by Councilmember Cody, City Council adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Transcribed by Clerk of Council

Approved & Accepted by City Council: 7/20/15