

City of Smyrna

*2800 King Street
Smyrna, Georgia 30080*



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 3, 2019

6:00 PM

City Hall

Committee of the Whole

1. Roll Call

Council: Mayor A. Max Bacon, Charles "Corkey" Welch, Tim Gould, Andrea Blustein, Derek Norton, Susan Wilkinson, Maryline Blackburn

Council (Excused): Ron Fennel

Staff: Tammi Saddler Jones (City Administrator), Terri Graham (City Clerk), Scott Cochran (City Attorney), Christy Ullman (Executive Asst. to Mayor & Council), Elsa Thompson (Admin. Svc. Coord.), Ashley Youmans (ICMA Man. Fellow), Richard Garland (Parks & Rec. Director), Brian Marcos (Deputy Fire Chief), Jennifer Bennett (Community Relations Director)

Guests: Glenn Page (General Manager, Cobb-Marietta Water Authority), Nancy McGhee (Smyrna Arts Council), Jali Taccone (Jali's Art World)

2. Call to Order

Mayor A. Max Bacon called to order the Committee of the Whole meeting at 6:00 pm; he advised that Councilmember Ron Fennel would be absent from tonight's meeting.

3. Presentation by Glenn Page from the Cobb County/Marietta Water Authority

Mayor Bacon introduced the General Manager of the Cobb-Marietta Water Authority (CCMWA), Mr. Glenn Page, and advised that he liked to invite them to do a presentation (here at the City) every one to two years in order to provide Council and staff with updates. Mr. Page gave listed their Board members and the items he would be discussing during his presentation. He spoke briefly about the water authority's 2018 accomplishments and stated that they were most proud of their Wyckoff Water Plant being named the best operated plant in the state and noted that their Quarles Plant received the 3rd place award in the same category. Mr. Page gave an infrastructure update and advised that over "50% of the Water Authority's funds were spent on infrastructure" and noted that they had a 279 million dollar capital improvement plan (to be spent over 5 years) which will be paid for with revenues and cash reserves. He stated that approximately 3 years ago they "created a tool" that allowed them to assess their in-ground pipes, gave an overview of ongoing projects and displayed photos of the different sites. Mr. Page gave an overview of water resources and stated that the new Water Control Manual (developed 3 years ago) resulted in securing water for metro Atlanta (including Cobb) through 2050; he noted that a Supreme Court lawsuit filed by the state of Florida in reference to the Chattahoochee River was still undecided and gave an update on a lawsuit regarding Allatoona Lake. Mr. Page spoke briefly about customer changes and noted that their 2nd biggest customer was Paulding County as they will be adding a new reservoir and water treatment plant. He advised that they had a new contract with Douglasville-Douglas County and that prior to the new contract they would "only pay for water they used" but with the new contract they pay a monthly fee to be connected to CCMWA system which cost Douglasville-Douglas County 1.2 million dollars (last year). Mr. Page advised that CCMWA had increased infrastructure revenues which allows them to provide out of county customers but also allows them to provide low rates to their in county customers. He gave details about their "Rate Program", displayed charts which detailed both their monthly and annual average production, and gave an overview of the overall functionality of the program. Mr. Page stated that 2019 was year 2 of a 3 year program with a 2% annual rate increase and noted that the wholesale rate would

increase 6 cents per thousand gallons for in-county customers; he also displayed a water rate comparison chart which compared CCMWA to other water authorities. Mayor Bacon advised that he liked having CCMWA present because it was "good to be able to answer why the increase happened" when customers inquire about it. There was a brief discussion about water usage and restrictions over the years. Mayor Bacon stated that he like that Board was a mixture of elected officials and citizens, commended them, and thanked Mr. Page for the presentation.

4. City Administrator Report

City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones advised that she invited Deputy Fire Chief Brian Marcos to attend the COW meeting because he had some positive feedback about how Smyrna Fire handled a house fire at 1080 Fleming Street on December 30th and she wanted him to share that information with the Council. Mr. Marcos stated that "a page came in about 1:30am" about a structural fire. He stated that it was a very large fire and that he was impressed by how calm and collected the firefighters were in battling the fire. He made note that they contained the fire so well that a home that was in very close proximity to the fire was not affected. Mayor Bacon inquired "how far along" the fire was when the firefighters arrived. Mr. Marcos advised that the flames were shooting through the roof and so large that it could be seen from afar. Mayor Bacon stated that most calls to the fire department were not fire related but that our firefighters know how to handle calls of this magnitude. Mr. Marcos stated that the way their firefighters are trained was "high risk, low frequency" which basically meant "very dangerous, doesn't happen a lot". Mayor Bacon made note that a fire call of this magnitude was why Fire Command staff was consistently requesting a facility where they could train for fires like this one. Ms. Saddler Jones advised that Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews invited the Nancy McGhee with the Smyrna Arts Council and Jali Taccone of Jali's Art World to do a presentation. Ms. McGhee stated that she was the vice president and that the president could not be present. She advised that they wanted to update the Council on their upcoming 2019/2020 events and that they wanted to start a community art program. Ms. McGhee stated that they were in the process of creating a new website and that they had changed their name and logo, removing the word "culture by vote of the Board". She advised that they were in talks with local artists in hopes of creating a "mural project" to paint murals around the City. Ms. Taccone advised that she owned an art gallery in Smyrna Market Village (SMV), noted that she contacted Councilmember Maryline Blackburn in regards to painting a mural on the side of one of the buildings in SMV and displayed a large painting (replica) of what the proposed mural. City Attorney Scott Cochran noted that there would be a lot of steps that would need to be taken due to covenant restrictions; there discussions about the possible approval process and the effect the paint would have on the brick. Ms. Taccone donated a large piece of wall art to the City. Ms. Saddler Jones advised that the City received a \$20,000 dollar grant from Georgia Municipal Association for safety and liability items and noted that Human Resources was currently working on the 2019 application. She advised that the City's workers compensation insurance premiums were reduced for 2019 for a total of \$26,358, stating that this was the 3rd year in a row that this happened. Ms. Saddler Jones announced that Keep Smyrna Beautiful (KSB) won 2 awards from Keep America Beautiful (KAB) for the 19th consecutive year and that KSB would be honored at KAB's conference in February; she noted that no press releases or public announcements could be done until after KAB made the official announcement. ICMA Management Fellow Ashley Youmans advised that the Smyrna Citizen's Academy would be on the same schedule as 2018 and noted some of the key dates.

5. Review of the January 7, 2019 Mayor and Council Agenda

Formal Business

6A – Parks and Recreation Director Richard Garland advised that there were revisions to pages 143 and 144 – second line in the opening paragraph, added the wording “for consideration”. He provided Council with the new sheets that were to be replaced pages in their Master Plan notebooks. Councilmember Andrea Blustein inquired if Spring Road Linear Park was included. Mr. Garland advised that it included all of the parks and advised of the second change – on line 6, added the sentence “This process should include meeting with neighborhoods to determine needs prior to any substantial changes to any park” (following the sentence that reads “The city should look to establish a transparent parks master plan process...”); also, “meeting with neighborhood to determine needs” bullet point was removed from the parks listed. Ms. Blustein stated that she did not see Spring Road Linear Park listed. Mr. Garland advised that not every park was part of the vision workshop. Councilmember inquired why Spring Road Linear Park was not listed and if it meant it would not be worked on. Mr. Garland advised that the park not being listed only meant that it was not discussed in the workshop. Councilmember Susan Wilkinson made note that she did not see Concord Linear Park listed either.

6B – Mr. Garland advised that the backstop and netting system was being redone. He stated that the cinderblock backstop was no longer safe so they were replacing and adding a new netting system. He advised that Quality Diversified Services was the only company who submitted a bid for the project and noted that the project would be paid for with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones inquired if the baseball season started in February. Mr. Garland advised that it did and that they hoped to have the work completed by February 19th for a game on February 20th. City Clerk Terri Graham advised that the contract was “ready to go” to the City Attorney if approved by Council. Councilmember Tim Gould inquired if they had a “backup plan” if the field was not ready. Mr. Garland advised that the game would be played high school (if need be). Councilmembers and Mr. Garland briefly discussed the backstop project. Mr. Gould inquired if there was an architect for the project. Mr. Garland stated that Foley Design did the master plan for Lattanzi field, pro bono but that they are only addressing the safety issue. Councilmember Charles “Corkey” Welch inquired if Mr. Foley had been paid for his architectural work being done on the backstop. Mr. Garland advised that he was paid. Ms. Blustein revisited her inquiry about Spring Road Linear Park and made note that it was on a main street. Mayor Bacon advised that her inquiry had nothing to do with the item and inquired if there were any questions in regards to the item; no one had any questions. Mayor Bacon then addressed Ms. Blustein.

Ms. Blustein stated that she had no input on the park, saying she felt she “inherited a nightmare” and posed the question “why did you let Ron (former Councilmember Ron Newcomb) tear down those 3 houses and put Linear park there”. Mayor Bacon stated that he “did not let Ron do anything” and stated that citizens in Ward 1 and 2 wanted a park and he gave a brief history on how that park came to be. Ms. Blustein suggested they turn the park into a garden. Mayor Bacon advised Ms. Blustein that if she wanted to change the park usage she should bring it to Council to request the change. Ms. Blustein stated that she was constantly responding to inquiries about the stabbing that took place at that park. Mayor Bacon made note that the stabbing happened at approximately 8:30am, in the morning. Ms. Blustein stated that there were various concerned citizens who utilized the park in the early morning hours before work. Ms. Wilkinson advised that a Ward 5 citizen spoke to her about their concerns about Spring Road Linear Park – she stated that she suggested to them to walk on the sidewalk closest to the street – the citizen stated that it was “the scariest walk, barely

any space between the sidewalk and road". Ms. Blustein stated that officers were performing foot patrol to be sure that homeless people were not sleeping in the park. Councilmember Derek Norton suggested that the park close once it gets dark and have the park rangers patrol it nightly. Ms. Wilkinson inquired if all parks were patrolled at night. Mr. Garland suggested that she ask the Police Chief. Ms. Wilkinson stated that she felt it would be cheaper to have lighting in the park. Mr. Welch stated that lighting would face some resistance from the residents. Mayor Bacon made reference to the master plan – "general improvements to all parks". Brief discussions continued about the master plans. Mayor Bacon made note that the tax payers paid for the study and that he hoped that it did not "sit on a shelf".

6C – Mayor Bacon advised that the qualifying fees were based on the current salaries of the Mayor and Council and inquired if Council wanted to increase the salaries. No one responded. Ms. Graham stated that the fees were 3% of their current salary. She stated that a small ad would be placed in the legal section of a few newspapers as required by state law before February 1st. She advised that the qualifying date would be August 19th, that the item would come before Council again to approve the qualifying days/dates and made note that she would like to do "Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday" in order to avoid court day which is on Mondays. Mayor Bacon inquired why everything was not done at once. Ms. Graham advised that Cobb County did not have the election contract ready.

Consent Agenda

8A – 8F – no discussion

8G – Community Relations Director Jennifer Bennett advised that the language for the Crawfish Boil would need more work and advised that it would be corrected prior to the upcoming Council meeting.

No items were added to the agenda.

6. Other Business

Councilmember Maryline Blackburn advised that the City of Stockbridge would be coming to Smyrna for their annual retreat on January 11th. She stated that they would be meeting in City Hall's HR Training Room then touring the City.

Councilmember Corkey Welch inquired if there was a projected date on fire station 2 re-opening. Mayor Bacon stated that there "red mud" on the front of the building that needed to be washed off. City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones advised that she would notify the Fire Chief.

City Attorney Scott Cochran advised that the City budgeted \$860,000 for two cases but ended up only having to pay out \$150,000. He inquired if Council was in agreement with the settlement; Council was in agreement.

Mayor Bacon advised that the columns in Smyrna Market Village needed to be replaced – paint was blistered and wood was rotted.

Mr. Welch stated that there were "a lot of City buildings that needed pressure washing" and made note that there was mildew built up on the bricks in the back of City Hall. Mayor Bacon stated that the City buildings should be on a regular schedule to be cleaned. City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones stated that she would be advising staff.

7. Adjournment

Mayor A. Max Bacon declared the meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm.