



**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEOGA HELD IN  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS MUNICIPAL BUILDING 533 CHESTNUT  
JUNE 16, 2003, 7:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Gary A. Mercer and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Those present were: Commissioners Varner, Stewart, Russell, Warner, and Mayor Mercer.

State Representative Roger Eddy was present to introduce himself to the City Council and to offer his assistance in any future projects the city might have. He told the Council he will be hosting an Economic Development summit in Effingham on July 15<sup>th</sup>, and invited them to attend. Both he and his assistant gave members business cards and asked them to contact them with concerns or needs. Council thanked Representative Eddy for taking the time to attend the Council Meeting and expressed appreciation for his concern for the community. Representative Eddy left the council meeting at this time.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

Mayor Mercer opened the Appropriation Ordinance Public Hearing at 7:10 P.M., and asked for any comments from the public. Commissioner Warner explained that some changes in appropriations had been made to allow for a Construction Grant for sewer main and sewer plant improvement in the amount of \$450,000. Also, to allow for a loan in the amount of \$150,000 for the city portion of the grant. Additionally, provision was made for a loan to the general fund in the amount of \$200,000 for unexpected expenditures. Commissioner Warner also noted that provisions were made for hold over grant monies that were not paid out in fiscal year 2002/2003 but will be paid out during this fiscal year. The total appropriation for fiscal year 2003/2004 \$5,236,168.00. It was the consensus of the Council to hold the Appropriation Ordinance over for passage at the July 7, 2003 meeting.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Mercer closed the Public Hearing at 7:18 P.M.

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

**LIFE CENTER**

Corinthia Croy Director of the Life Center addressed the City Council to request a donation for the Life Center. Ms. Croy discussed with the council the many services provided to Neoga and all Cumberland County senior citizens. She explained some of the programs, such as, transportation, circuit breaker, and gap filling services. Croy said the number of users of the Life Center programs has increased. They presently have room air conditioners that can be used by senior citizens and returned

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when no longer needed. Motion: Commissioner Warner made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Stewart, to approve a donation in the amount of \$2500 to the Life Center. Yeas, Commissioners Stewart, Varner, Russell, Warner, and Mayor Mercer. Nays, none. Motion carried. 5-0

#### NEED FOR STORAGE CABINETS WITH LOCKS

City Clerk Ehrhart discussed the need for record storage cabinets with the Council. It was explained that a large amount of records are being stored in the front office. With a critical need for confidentiality for many of those records it was of great concern that these records should be in cabinets with locks on them. One cost estimate for shelving has been obtained, however, that was for open shelving. Council directed Ehrhart to proceed with obtaining cost estimates for cabinet's with locks instead of open shelving.

#### CUMBERLAND COUNTY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Jonathan McKenzie Economic Development Director of Cumberland County Development Corporation was present. McKenzie discussed some ongoing projects with the Council. Additionally, he presented a Demographic, Retail Trade & Property Tax Analysis Booklet, that was compiled by CCDC. McKenzie told the Council that the information provided should be beneficial in economic development efforts in the County. Mayor Mercer thanked McKenzie and expressed the appreciation of the City Council for the work done by CCDC for the benefits of the communities and county.

#### **FINANCE**

##### BILLS

Commissioner Warner made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Varner, to approve the payment of the bills in the amount of \$60,371.69. Yeas, Commissioners Russell, Warner, Varner, Stewart, and Mayor Mercer. Nays, none. Motion carried. 5-0

##### TREASURER'S REPORT

The corrected April and the month of May statement of fund balances was given to all council members. After review of the statement, Commissioner Warner made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Russell, to approve the reports. Yeas, Commissioners Stewart, Varner, Warner, Russell, and Mayor Mercer. Nays, none. Motion carried. 5-0

#### **PUBLIC PROPERTY**

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**REPORT FROM SUPERINTENDENT HAGERSTROM**

Commissioner Warner told the Council that Ben Bland made arrangements for IDOT to take core samples and conduct compaction testing on 6<sup>th</sup> street. Warner said that Daily & Associates, Engineers are concerned that the City will pay a premium if construction is started on 6<sup>th</sup> street this late in the construction year. Daily & Associates does not have the design work completed yet. Hagerstrom said he would like to see it done this year.

Superintendent Hagerstrom reported on the following.

1. Has worked with County Engineer Ben Bland on a couple of projects. They cleaned the ditches on Trowbridge Road near Heartland and did core drilling for samples of the pavement on 6<sup>th</sup> street.
2. E.C. Baker & Sons, Inc. pulled the de-stratifier at the lake on Saturday. They think there is a problem with the gear box.
3. The Modern Woodmen Club is painting fire hydrants and repainting the pole people.
4. Got a repair kit for the mosquito spraying machine. Will begin spraying as soon as it is repaired. Hagerstrom said they do have the tablets that you put in water to kill larva.
5. Ground 14 tree stumps and will use the grinding mix with wood chips for mulching.

**STREET'S AND ALLEY'S**

**DISCUSSION ABOUT PLANTING FLOWER BED**

Council discussed the possibility of planting a flower bed on the boulevard in front of Carruthers IGA. Alan Baker told the Council that Tom Helm was willing to help with the project on his own time but they will need to use the backhoe to remove sod. It was noted that many good comments have been received from citizens about the flower beds that have been planted on boulevards downtown. Council agreed that these flower beds are a good addition to the community. Commissioner Russell instructed Baker to move forward with the proposed project

**PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY**

**ABANDONED VEHICLES AND HOUSES NEEDING TO BE BROUGHT UP TO CODE**

Commissioner Stewart told the Council that all the vehicles have been removed from the property located on the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut. She explained that the City did not remove them they were removed by representatives of the owner. Additionally, Stewart told the Council that the owner of the property located at 634 Elm will begin the process of tearing down that residence when they return from vacation on July 24<sup>th</sup>.

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Commissioner Warner made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Varner, to adjourn the meeting. Before a vote was taken Commissioner Stewart said she would like to discuss an issue which involved her. Commissioner Warner asked if it was City Business. Commissioner Stewart replied stating it was a situation which involved her and the park. Commissioner Warner interrupted, and asked again if it was city business. Commissioner Stewart said, yes, the Attorney General says it is. Mayor Mercer told her this matter was not a City issue. Commissioner Stewart said a complaint had been filed. Mayor Mercer asked what complaint and where had it been filed. Commissioner Stewart said she would have to ask Mr. Ramsey. Brent Ramsey representing SAIL, Soyland Access for Independent Living, said no complaint had been filed a phone call was received. Commissioner Stewart said she would like to address rumors and innuendoes about something involving her. Commissioner Warner told her that everyone at the Council table already believed her. Mayor Mercer told Commissioner Stewart that we would not discuss rumors and innuendoes at the council table. Mayor Mercer stated again that this was not a city issue that the matter involved the Park District not the City. When Commissioner Stewart continued, he reiterated that he would not discuss the matter any further without an attorney present. Commissioner Stewart stated she might not be able to continue as a council member because she cannot separate her job from council, and would discuss the matter with the press. Mayor Mercer told her he could not stop her from speaking with whomever she chooses.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Warner made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Russell, to adjourn the regular meeting of June 16, 2003, at 8:20 p.m. Yeas, Commissioners Russell, Varner, Warner, and Mayor Mercer. Nays, Commissioner Stewart. Motion carried. 4-1

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Gary A. Mercer, Mayor

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Patricia D. Ehrhart, MMC, City Clerk