



CITY OF KINGSLAND, GEORGIA

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES • OCTOBER 2, 2017

Special Called Meeting

City Council Chamber

6:00 PM

107 South Lee Street - City Hall, Kingsland, GA 31548

I. PUBLIC HEARING - STARTS AT 6:00PM

Mayor Smith called the Public Hearing to order at 6:00 PM.

Mayor Smith stated the reason for the Public Hearing was to address the concern in our public safety departments and the safety of the community. This has been under discussion for the past six (6) months.

1. Public Hearing: Proposed Property Tax Increase -

The Kingsland City Mayor and Council have tentatively proposed a 2017 millage rate which will require an increase in property taxes by 13.94% or 1.04 mills. The proposed increase includes an additional 1.00 mill to dedicate funds for public safety operations and an additional .04 mills for general fund operations. This tentative increase will result in a millage rate of 8.50 mills, an increase of 1.04 mills. Without this tentative tax increase, the millage rate will be no more than 7.46 mills. The proposed tax increase for a home with a fair market value of \$100,000 is approximately \$41.60 and for a home with a fair market value of \$300,000 is approximately \$124.80.

Mr. Alex Blount, 293 Laurel Landing Blvd. addressed the Mayor and City Council. Mr. Blount stated that he appreciates that meetings like this one can be difficult because anytime there is an increase to taxpayers one must address their point of view. Mr. Blount felt the Mayor and Council had not cut the budget to the bear bones, i.e., \$15,000 decorative improvements to City Hall, \$17,000 military liason, and \$25,000 IT back-up system. Councilman Blount stated the new budget does not account for new revenue and did not want the taxpayers to be misled. Councilman Blount presented an argument in support of leaving the budget with no increase in millage rate.

Mr. John Whitters, 118 Wolfbay Circle addressed the Mayor and City Council. Mr. Whitters stated that he could support the one percent millage rate if it would allow the city to be competitive and our public safety officers to stay. He asked if the one percent was dedicated to just public service and he was assured it was.

Mr. D. Ruiz, 214 Lake Wisteria Drive addressed the Mayor and City Council. Mr. Ruiz stated he would never oppose a rate increase for public safety, however, this comes at a difficult time. He questioned how two (2) neighborhoods in Kingsland could flood twice in the past few years. Mr. Ruiz questioned whether a

comprehensive plan to address concerns in Lakevine would be undertaken. Mr. Ruiz stated he was not afraid of criminals, but he was afraid of rising water.

Ms. Yolanda Ramsey, 94 Honeysuckle Road addressed the Mayor and City Council. Ms. Ramsey asked why was the city told it could not go on the property to drain water. Ms. Ramsey stated it was going to cost her \$42,000 to rebuild. Ms. Ramsey asked the city to not raise her taxes.

Mr. Bo Kinsley, 94 Alvah Brazell Road addressed the Mayor and City Council. Mr. Kinsey stated that this is not the time to raise peoples taxes we are homeless and your trying to raise taxes. Mr. Kinsley stated he had \$40,000 in damage and FEMA gave him \$10,000.

Mr. Lee Spell, City Manager reminded everyone that FEMA is not finished and they are still working in the area.

Ms. Kylee Seymour, Hydrangea Road stated that her application is closed out and processed. FEMA never stepped in her home. Ms. Seymour stated it will cost between \$40,000 - \$50,000 in repairs. Ms. Seymour asked if she could file a claim against the cities insurance company.

Mr. Lee Spell, City Manager stated she was welcome to file a claim.

Ms. Seymour made an open records request to the City Clerk. Ms. Seymour stated she is opposed to any tax increase.

Council McClain stated that there are some facts that the public needs to know. In 1988 a court order was put in place to prevent the city from flowing anymore water from the West side of Gross Road to East Side of Gross Road owned by Rayland. On the day of the flood because the water could not get under the road it flooded; the water table being higher than normal and all features set-up the perfect storm. Councilman McClain stated we are not a modern city we do what we can with the resources that we have.

Councilman McClain also stated that he could assure everyone that the city's Public Works Department were out in boats in neighborhoods because he was with them. He stated that the water was so heavy in such a short period of time, he watched the water rise in his home and thought he would loose his business. Councilman McClain stated public safety employees, public works were able to do what they could with the resources that they have. Councilman McClain stated the city has learned a lot and now have the ability to get funding and come back with a solution.

Councilman McClain stated that Lee Spell, City Manager is working with FEMA to help fix problems, and as much as everyone would like to hate someone it was Mr. Spell that made the decision to turn off water and sewer at a critical time so the

sewerage would not flow into the plant that could not handle it and everyone would have backed up.

Mr. Ron Sawyer, 152 Bryce Ryan Circle addressed the Mayor and City Council. Mr. Sawyer said he realizes it can be distasteful to pay more taxes, but the city needs the money. Mr. Sawyer stated that the police are doing their job, but crime is working its way into here. Mr. Sawyer stated that the public safety departments are telling you they don't have enough money then we need to support this.

Ms. Keesla Kennedy, 602 Camden Street addressed the Mayor and City Council. Ms. Kennedy expressed her concern for her sister who lives on Summerbrook Trail who woke up to water and snakes in her home. When her sister called the emergency number she was informed no one could come. Ms. Keesla was informed by Mayor Smith that after a certain wind speed the emergency crews cannot go out. Ms. Kennedy stated this is not a time to raise taxes.

Mr. Chuck Seymour, 129 Hydrangea Road inquired as to the time frame of the trucks picking up debris in neighborhoods. Mr. Seymour expressed concerns regarding the ditches that have trees across them.

Mr. Lee Spell, City Manager stated the city is working with "Work Force" for manual labor and will have people using hand tools to clean up in the hard to reach areas.

Mr. Tracy Gill, 116 Wolfbay Circle asked the Mayor and Council if they were her, would they rebuild their home?

Councilman McClain stated she should look to an engineer for that question and it is situation by situation.

Mayor Smith asked Mr. Lee Spell to set up an engineer if he could for Ms. Gill. Mr. Robbie Cheek, Engineer stated he would like a process if this were to happen.

Councilman McClain asked when was the last time the city raised taxes. Mr. Lee Spell, City Manager stated there has been no increase in 16 years, the millage rate has remained the same or lower.

Councilman Day stated that the department heads would ask for the moon knowing they would be cut. I want to do the right thing and this is not a good thing to increase taxes and felt it was worth the fight; this is not a good time to raise taxes on the back of taxpayers.

Councilman Ham stated that if the city is going to grow then it needs to think of it's employees, if we don't have people we don't have anything. Councilman Ham questioned why the citizens did not come if they were opposed to tax increase.

Councilman McClain stated that this increase is a narrow attempt to save city employees. It is prudent to keep talented people, it is very expensive to retrain people and from a business standpoint it does not make good business sense. Councilman McClain stated there is no good time to raise taxes and every year the promise has been made for the following year.

Mayor Smith stated the city has cut to the bone, and suggested adding a sunset clause in the hopes of revenue improving.

Councilman Winters asked when the last time the employees received a raise. Mr. Lee Spell stated that pay raises between 1% and 3% were given last year.

Councilman Day stated that the Council did not realize people had a raise; and the Finance Director and City Manager recommended a budget that did not include a millage rate increase. Councilman Day stated we should let our employees know we are with them and we are going to do what we can for them and we are going to do so in the best way to keep our citizens whole,

Mr. Ed Gushen addressed the Mayor and City Council and spoke about his displeasure about the tax increase.

Mayor Smith called the Public Hearing to a close at 8:00 PM.

II. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME GUESTS

Mayor Smith called the regular scheduled meeting to order at 8:00 PM.

III. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Councilman Ham gave the Invocation and led the audience in the Pledge to the Flag.

IV. ROLL CALL

Kenneth E Smith Sr
Charles Grayson Day Jr.
James Ham
Jim McClain
Richard A. Winters

Mayor
Mayor Pro Tem
City Councilman
City Councilman
City Councilman

V. CONSENT DOCKET

RESULT: **APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER: Charles Grayson Day Jr., Mayor Pro Tem
SECONDER: Richard A. Winters, City Councilman
AYES: Day Jr., Ham, McClain, Winters

- A. Approve the Council Minutes of the last regular council Meeting
- B. Approve the Agenda as Presented
- C. Approve the Payments of Accounts Payable as Due and Funds Available

VI. GRANTING AUDIENCE TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Steven Sainz, Executive Director, Camden Family Connection addressed the Mayor and City Council. Mr. Sainz reported that the Salvation Army has \$100,000 in food gift cards available to people who were affected by the disaster.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Proclamation: Pink Out Friday, October 13, 2017 -

RESULT: **APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER: Charles Grayson Day Jr., Mayor Pro Tem
SECONDER: Richard A. Winters, City Councilman
AYES: Day Jr., Ham, McClain, Winters

2. Approval Of: 2017 Millage Rate - -

In accordance with O.C.G.A. Section 48-5-32.1 final millage rate is set by the authority of this taxing jurisdiction for tax year 2017. Required five year history and current digest and notice of property tax increase advertisements have been published and required public meetings have been held in accordance with O.C.G.A. Section 48-5-32.

Councilman Day made a motion to approve Option C which he presented to the Finance Director today. Option C maintained the current millage rate and removed carpet and blind replacements for City Hall, it removed the refurbishing of the downtown clock to pay for the drainage study, it added Planning and Zoning co-sharing, and included a \$600.00 Christmas bonus to all employees. Councilman Day stated he would do everything he could to help the public safety departments, but felt this was not the time.

No one seconded the motion.

Councilman McClain made a motion to approve Option B.

Councilman Day asked for discussion stating he owned Option C and asked the Council Members to sell him on Option B.

Councilman McClain stated that the people you see here tonight in the audience, our public service people, they can tell you on a daily basis why it is needed. Councilman McClain stated he has been a Councilman for six years and all we have done is cut and cut and cut we cannot cut anymore. Councilman McClain said that it has always been next year we have to do something this year and he is fine with getting rid of the carpet and blind replacements for City Hall and refurbishing of the downtown clock. Councilman McClain said he knew he could not change Councilman Day's mind but at least you know there is no more bone to cut.

Councilman Day said he does not know of any company who would give a 10% raise.

Councilman McClain said he is a good steward of money and he knows from his own business how hard it is to hire good people and when you get them in the door you do not want to loose them. Councilman McClain stated that the taxpayers put the council members there and expect them to run the city properly.

Councilman Ham seconded the motion with a sunset clause of 5 years and remove city hall carpet and blinds replacement, transfer refurbishing the clock to drainage study. The vote was: Winters, yes, McClain, yes, Ham, yes, Day, no. The motion carried.

RESULT:	ADOPTED AS AMENDED [3 TO 1]
MOVER:	Jim McClain, City Councilman
SECONDER:	James Ham, City Councilman
AYES:	Ham, McClain, Winters
NAYS:	Day Jr.

3. Approval Of: Resolution 2017-11: Adoption of FY2017-2018 Operating Budget
-

Option A: Budget as presented based on tax rollback rate 7.46 mills, contingency at \$143,631.

Option B: Budget includes up to 1 mill dedicated to public safety operations and up to .04 mills for general fund operations based on increased tax rate up to 8.50 mills, contingency at \$159,631.

Option C: Remove City Hall carpet & blinds replacement, transfer funds for clock refurbishment to drainage study, add P&Z county co-sharing savings, include \$600 employee Christmas bonus. Contingency at 7.46 mills=\$107,419; at 7.50 mills=\$123,419.

Councilman Ham made a motion to approve the FY2017/2018 operating budget at 7.46 mills. Councilman Day seconded the motion.

The vote was: Winters, no, McClain, no, Ham, no, Day, yes.

Councilman Winters made motion to approve Option B, 8.50 mills with 1 mill dedicated to public safety operations. Councilman McClain seconded the motion. The vote was: Winters, yes, McClain, yes, Ham, yes, Day, no. The motion passed.

4. Approval Of: 2017 Georgia Gateway CID Millage at 10.00 Mills -

At a scheduled Georgia Gateway Community Improvement District meeting on August 22, 2017, the CID Board set the 2017 CID Millage rate at 10 mills. All property owners in the district voted in favor.

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: James Ham, City Councilman
SECONDER: Richard A. Winters, City Councilman
AYES: Day Jr., Ham, McClain, Winters

5. Approval of - Coastal Georgia Community College MOU - Police Chief Darryl Griffis

Staff recommend approval.

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Charles Grayson Day Jr., Mayor Pro Tem
SECONDER: Richard A. Winters, City Councilman
AYES: Day Jr., Ham, McClain, Winters

6. Approval of - IGA for Planning and GIS Services -

Intergovernmental agreement for Planning and GIS services between Camden County Board of Commissioners and the City of Kingsland.

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Richard A. Winters, City Councilman
SECONDER: James Ham, City Councilman
AYES: Day Jr., Ham, McClain, Winters

7. Discussion - Kings Bay Fire Department Purple Heart Parking Spaces -

RESULT: WITHDRAWN

8. Cancellation of October 9, 2017 City Council Meeting Due to Columbus Day Holiday -

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	James Ham, City Councilman
SECONDER:	Richard A. Winters, City Councilman
AYES:	Day Jr., Ham, McClain, Winters

VIII. MAYOR AND COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENT

Mayor Smith stated that Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) has been cited as #1 in the nation for its employee benefit and technical consulting services to local municipalities.

IX. ADJOURNED

Councilman Day made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Ham seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:46 PM.

Kenneth E. Smith, Sr., Mayor

ATTEST:

Linda M. O'Shaughnessy, City Clerk