

MINUTES
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, February 7, 2011

Members Present:

Mayor John Weaver
Jim Looney
John Foust
Tony Fountain
Allison Ballew
Anne Morrow

Members Absent:

None

Legal Counsel:

Bill Pickett

Staff:

Tacie Williams
Michael Castagna
Greg Lovell
Steve Roper
Lonnie Waters
Tonya Dutton
Jill Pendley
Cliff Fisher
Stella Brewer

Press:

Angela Reinhardt

Guests in Attendance:

Mari Livsey
Gerry Nechvatal
Jay and Susan Wright
Ron and Linda Barnes
Amelia McIntyre
Sam Wheeler
David Carver
James Johnson
Arnold Johnson
Scott and Mary Perkins
Matt Bidwell
Craig McKenzie
Royce Haley
Dee Boggus
T.J. Fowler
Joseph Stell
Alex Scurry

Mayor Weaver called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. He requested Lonnie Waters give the invocation.

Mayor Weaver asked that the agenda be reviewed and approved by Council. Councilwoman Anne Morrow made a motion to approve the agenda as presented and Councilwoman Allison Ballew seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Mayor Weaver announced that the next item on the agenda would be postponed. Harold Cantrell was not available to attend the meeting tonight, and he apologized to those in attendance that were present for the presentation to Mr. Cantrell.

Mayor Weaver recognized David Carver who was present with three members of the Jasper Boy Scout Troop 836. Mr. Carver explained that he and the scouts were present to fulfill the requirements of the citizenship merit badge. Mayor Weaver welcomed them to the meeting.

City Clerk Tacie Williams read the minutes of the January 3, 2011 regular meeting. Councilwoman Anne Morrow made a motion to adopt the minutes as read, and Councilman Jim Looney seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote. Mayor Weaver asked that it be noted in the minutes that Councilman Tony Fountain was not present.

There was no Old Business to address on the agenda.

First item under New Business, Mayor Weaver recognized Matt Bidwell with MSI Benefits to present to Council the proposed health insurance plan renewal for April 1, 2011. Mr. Bidwell reviewed the contents of the packets he provided in detail. He recommended that Council accept the renewal option from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia, which entails a 9% increase in premium from the prior year for health insurance, and no increase for dental and life insurance. Finance Director Tacie Williams noted for Council that the 2011 Operating Budget included a provision for a 10% increase in the benefit cost, so this would adhere to the forecasted costs. Human Resources Coordinator Stella Brewer explained the concerns from an employee perspective for each of the renewal options. Councilman John Foust made a motion to accept Mr. Bidwell's recommendation. Councilwoman Anne Morrow seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Mayor Weaver asked that it be noted in the minutes that Councilman Tony Fountain joined the meeting during the health insurance discussion.

Second item under New Business, Mayor Weaver recognized Ron Barnes and Susan Wright, coordinators of the Jasper ArtFest, to petition Council for support of their upcoming event. Mrs. Wright explained the details of the event and the logistics involved concerning public safety and road closings in order to host the event. She also presented letters of support from the merchants on Main Street to Council. After several questions and discussion by Council, Mayor Weaver called for a vote to approve the event and the City's support concerning logistics. Councilman Looney made such motion, and Councilwoman Allison Ballew seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Mayor Weaver then asked Mrs. Wright to explain the Wine Crawl tentatively scheduled as part of the Jasper ArtFest and discuss with Council what they needed. She explained that the concept was to purchase a commemorative wine glass at one of the restaurants on Main Street and then visit each of the other restaurants to participate in a wine tasting in each location. She emphasized that this would be a wine tasting event and portions would be controlled as such. The real issue that she felt she needed approval for was the fact that the participants would be walking around the festival with wine. The event had a two hour time limit and no wine would leave the final location. Councilmembers discussed several issues including open container law, safety crossing Business Hwy 53, portion control, underage participation, current ordinances restricting consumption of alcohol on enclosed patios of restaurants, and state licensing requirements for special events. After a long discussion, Councilman Jim Looney made a motion to allow the Wine Crawl event if participants were issued armbands after providing an ID. Councilwoman Anne Morrow seconded the motion. Motion failed. Two votes in favor and three voted in dissent. Councilman Foust, Councilman Fountain and Councilwoman Ballew voted against the motion. Mayor Weaver clarified that the Wine Crawl could occur but participants must have empty glasses when leaving the establishment in order to comply with current ordinances. Mr. Barnes took a moment to thank the Mayor and Council for all of the support and assistance they have received already and in the future for the event.

Third item under New Business, Mayor Weaver announced that Rodney Gibson had resigned as Municipal Court Judge. He recommended Council appoint James Johnson as Judge Gibson's replacement. Councilman Tony Fountain made such motion, and Councilman Jim Looney seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous vote. Mayor Weaver administered the oath of office to James Johnson.

Fourth item under New Business, Tacie Williams presented for approval the franchise agreement from ETC for cable television. The rate remains unchanged at 4% and the terms of the agreement are 7 years beginning in February 2011. Councilman Jim Looney made a motion to enter into the agreement and Councilman Tony Fountain seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Fifth item under New Business, Tacie Williams presented a resolution to Council in support of the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Economic Development Administration. Mayor Weaver elaborated on the importance of these organizations and why the City's support of their continuance was essential to the future development to this region. Councilman John Foust made a motion to accept the resolution as read. Councilwoman Allison Ballew seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Last item under New Business, Mayor Weaver called for a motion to table the reading of the proposed animal control ordinance amendment. Councilman Tony Fountain made a motion to table the amendment and Councilwoman Allison Ballew seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Economic Developer Gerry Nechvatal gave a report to Mayor and Council.

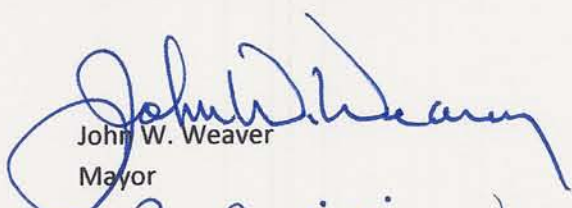

Finance Director Tacie Williams gave the financial report for the month of January 2011, as well as an update from the Clerk's office.

Lonnie Waters gave the animal control report for the month of January 2011.

Chief Greg Lovell gave a report of police activities for the month of January 2011.

Chief Steve Roper gave a report of fire activities for the month of January 2011.

Being no other business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned. Council is scheduled to convene next at the regular meeting on March 7, 2011.


John W. Weaver
Mayor

Tacie J. Williams
City Clerk/Finance Director