City of Tifton
City Council Retreat
April 2, 2015
8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Georgia Agricultural Museum Welcome Center
Whiddon Mill Road

ATTENDEES:

J. G. "Jamie" Cater, Jr., Mayor
Johnny Terrell, Vice Mayor
Wes Ehlers, Council Member
Christopher Parrott, Council Member

Larry Riner, City Manager
Rob Wilmot, City Attorney
Rona Martin, City Clerk
Lois Love, Finance Director
Jessica Jones, Executive Assistant

Julie Smith, Council Member (absent)

Mayor Cater gave the prayer.

Mr. Riner gave a recap of recent accomplishments such as debt retirement and smart sourcing of several departments.

DISCUSSION OF MUNICIPAL COURT FINES

Mr. Riner stated they are looking at the fines structure as compared to other surrounding areas. He stated a public defender and a prosecutor, currently Rob Wilmot, have been added to the courtroom as well.

DISCUSSION OF HEALTH INSURANCE

Carla Cooper stated we have been with Skip Hill and Associates for a number of years. She stated they shop the market every year. She stated that almost every year the insurance does increase, with this year being 19%. She reviewed the cost of premiums since 2012. She stated the employees will pay 18% and the City will pay 82%. She stated we have continued to adjust the plans to keep the costs as low as possible, resulting in less benefits for employees. She reviewed the premiums and things done to try to keep the plans affordable for the employees. She reviewed the experience for the past year wherein the insurance company paid out more than they received in premiums from the City. She stated Work Smart also made a presentation to employees about what they have to offer. She reviewed a "just the facts" sheet regarding benefits, etc. Mrs. Cooper reviewed how the insurance was shopped each year. Discussion was held regarding claims and higher costs associated with them.

DISCUSSION OF TIFT THEATRE BOARD

Mr. Riner stated several meetings of the theatre board have been called with participation fairly low. He stated the theatre director would like to dissolve the board and create an ambassador program of five people who would be in charge of helping to raise money, and provide a volunteer force for help at events. He stated the 12 member board is not functioning. He asked Councils' opinion of dissolving the board and replacing it with the five ambassadors. Mayor Cater asked Mr. Riner his opinion and he responded favorably to the ambassador program. Council Member Parrott reminded everyone of his chairing of the board and a challenge getting people there every month. He stated it was a volunteer force with no authority and he would favor an ambassador program. Mr. Ehlers asked about the authority to dissolve the board. Mr. Riner stated Council can dissolve it. Mayor Cater asked about appointments. Mr. Riner stated Robert Reid Goodson should have input on this, as he is familiar with who would work. Mayor Cater discussed possible appointments with each of the Council having input while speaking with Robert Reid Goodson. Mr. Riner stated they will come up with a slate of candidates

and if there is someone Council wants to add, staff can vet that person and make sure they are a willing participant, etc. Mayor Cater suggested a cross section of folks.

DISCUSSION OF PERMIT FEES

Mr. Riner reminded Council of the recent discussion and report by Council Member Ehlers at the March workshop. He asked for questions or concerns. He stated this will be on the meeting for April 6th.

STORM WATER/IMPACT FEES

Scott Murphy, ESG, Inc., gave an overview of various storm water issues currently in Tifton. He stated the proposed project near Town & Country Trailer Park is a prime example of storm water problems in Tifton. He discussed roads that have been repaired due to flooding and the time those roads were closed. He discussed an option as a means to deal with this problem in that of a storm water utility. He stated this is a mechanism to generate funding for storm water. He reviewed nearby communities that have storm water utilities in place. He stated Tifton has 45 square miles of basin area. He discussed the master drainage study done by Tribble & Richardson (Stantec) in 1998. He reviewed the conclusion of the study where half of the basins 24" or larger could not pass a two year rainfall. He stated design typically is for a 50 year rainfall event. He discussed how a program might work. He stated most large retailers are used to paying for storm water and impact fees. He stated revenue of $750,000 to $1,000,000 is generally generated for storm water purposes. He discussed recent work orders. He asked that Council consider a storm water utility as a way to take care of the problems related to storm water. Council Member Ehlers discussed impervious areas. Mr. Murphy discussed the current rates for the surrounding areas. Mr. Riner stated the process would take about two years with a huge education process. General discussion was held regarding a process for developing a utility. Council Member Ehlers stated we need an interlocal agreement for those whose property drains into the city's system, yet are not in the city limits.

SENIOR CENTER MEMBERSHIP PLANS

Fran Kinchen provided a handout and overview of the new requirement by the State of Georgia that seniors have to now pay membership fees to attend senior centers. She reviewed Tifton's proposed membership plan and draft submitted to the state. She stated $5 per month for residents and $10 for non-residents. She stated there is a free membership package for seniors who qualify under the Title 3, Older Americans Act. She discussed various activities that will go along with any membership fees. She stated our request to the state will be that this plan will be effective in January.

COST OF LIVING INCREASE FOR EMPLOYEES

Lois Love provided a hand out of her presentation consisting of Potential Market Value – Directed Pay Increase which consisted of an increase in targeted salaries to the current market value; pay higher than HUD income limits; retain accomplished employees; attract applicants with appropriate education and experience; offer opportunities for growth within the city. She reviewed the income limits summary from Housing Urban Development. She reviewed what other communities have done consisting of a formal market based study; cost of living adjustments; yearly COLA; average annual salary increase is over 3%; incentive pay offered in addition to annual COLA. She stated the plan of action is to raise certain positions to at least $15/hr to bring their salary to market level; and other positions increase rates based on performance at the hourly rate between $.25 - $1.00 per hour. She discussed projected payroll costs. She discussed future plans including a formal market compensation study and offering performance based incentives. Ms. Love reviewed the general fund revenue and expenditure history for fiscal years 2012-2014. She reviewed the general fund FY2015 revenues and expenses as of 3/31/15. She reviewed the general fund projections through 6/30/15. She reviewed the general fund cash analysis through 6/30/15. Mayor Cater suggested giving the top 33 1/3% employees a 3% raise, the middle 33 1/3% a 4% raise and the bottom 33 1/3% a 5% raise as everyone has to pay the same for food and fuel. He stated our salaries at the bottom rung are horrible. Mr. Riner stated the proposed rate will bring the

lower rung of folks up to a minimum $15.00 per hour. He stated the other folks above the $15.00 minimum will receive the $.25-$1.00 per hour pay raise based on performance.

Mr. Riner discussed proposed meetings that have been scheduled with Tift County regarding the fire department, and thus far they have been cancelled by the county.

LA ESTRELLA

Police Chief Buddy Dowdy stated Mr. Terrell's concern was that someone was hurt pretty bad a few weeks ago and that some of the witnesses were supposedly 16, 17 and 18 years old. He stated that La Estrella is considered a restaurant and as such, anyone is allowed to enter the premises. He stated Mr. Terrell is going into La Estrella Friday night to see what is happening. Mr. Terrell stated he was told the back entrance is blocked and there are no sprinklers in case of fire. He stated he is concerned about safety. He expressed concern about the building being rented to gangster groups and fighting. He asked that the fire inspector go to the building. Mr. Coleman stated the occupant load is 100 people or more and falls under the state fire marshal's office. He stated they can still participate in some type of inspection. He stated he will look into it more closely. Mrs. Gaskins stated this business is impacting the ability to rent other spaces in the area as prospective renters feel it is not safe there. Mr. Terrell expressed concern over her being open after hours. Discussion was held regarding possible inspection of the business.

HANDY STOP

Mr. Riner stated the Handy Stop on 12th Street is legal; and Mr. Wilmot will address the legal issues. Mr. Wilmot reviewed the city's ordinance for distance requirements and the need for clarification. He then reviewed a proposed revision to the ordinance providing for a clearer understanding of distance requirements based on state law. He then read the state law. He said state law only addresses distances to churches for distilled spirits, not malt and wine beverages. He stated it does address malt and wine beverages in proximity to schools and school grounds, but not churches. He stated our ordinance currently states 300 ft. from a church. He said state law makes reference to a church building. He discussed what is a church building. He discussed an attorney general's unofficial opinion on the matter. He stated the DOR has adopted regulations for measuring distances for schools from the front door of a location selling the alcohol to the property line of the school; when you talk about a church it is from front door to front door. He discussed the state law for package sales vs. on premise sales. He stated we have to decide what is a church building and how to address it. He stated most cities do not define church building. He reviewed some of those who do define it. He stated we cannot be less restrictive than state law. He stated the intent of the legislature is they don't want alcohol in close proximity to where folks go to church or school. He suggested the definition of church building should be as a place where regular church services are held. He stated code Section 6-65 tracks state law for distance requirements as required by the state either from a church, school, drug alcohol treatment center, or a housing authority unit (on premises sales). He stated the distance measurements are pursuant to the Department of Revenue. He said the state does not regulate on premise consumption. He reviewed the other current regulations in our ordinance. He discussed the use of surveys for distance requirements if Council so chooses. A general discussion was held regarding distances, church buildings, and the Handy Stop. Mr. Wilmot reminded Council that going from property line to property line at Handy Stop to the 1st Methodist Church the measurement is over 300 feet. Mr. Riner stated he checked the deeds and road frontage on those parcels, and it is over 300 feet. Mr. Wilmot stated the Handy Stop is over 300 ft. from the church property, property line to property line. Mr. Wilmot stated "church building" has to be defined. He stated he would work on that and send it out. Mr. Riner suggested this be a workshop item and allow staff more time for review.

GMA DINNER

Jessica Jones reviewed the plans for a dinner with Council during the GMA conference. She also reviewed information for Georgia Cities Week.

TIFT THEATRE EASEMENT

Mr. Riner stated we will be ready to move forward with this item at next Monday's regular meeting.

EFFECTS OF HB 170

Mr. Riner stated the bill has gone to the Governor's Office for signature, and as it stands we are not presently impacted, however, in the future county governments may at its option, without an interlocal agreement, levy a transportation SPLOST up to 70% of the total revenue in ½% increments. He stated local governments have the option to have a T SPLOST. Council Member Ehlers asked about the $3.00 cap. Mr. Riner stated we will be able to tax everything (motor fuel) up to $3.00. Mr. Ehlers asked if we pass a T SPLOST, does this bill cease to exist. Mr. Riner stated no, it does not.

CURRENT INTERLOCAL AGREEMENTS

Mr. Riner updated everyone on recent conversations he has had with the County Manager regarding the Fire Department budget and future of the Tifton/Tift County Fire Department. He stated they've met with Mr. Carter every year during the budget process for review and input. Mr. Riner asked Chief Coleman to present his information on the Fire Department. Mr. Coleman reviewed calls for service history from 1998-2014; 2014 calls per district; calls for service for 2014; the fire protection agreement history along with ISO ratings; trends as related to fire protection; paramount considerations and other considerations based on various scenarios and overall costs of operating the fire department. Discussion was held on various aspects of the interlocal agreement. Discussion was held regarding the Service Delivery Coordination Committee and process/protocol for addressing concerns. Mayor Cater asked Mr. Riner call and offer the county three different days and time frames to set up an SDCC meeting for this matter.

COUNCIL INPUT OF FUTURE PROJECTS AND/OR INITIATIVES

Mr. Riner asked for additional concerns/requests for FY2016. He discussed a conversation he had with Jim Carter regarding the landfill.

He stated water and sewer rates will be going up this year due to the cost of operations.

Council Member Parrott asked for a list of LMIG streets. Jessica Jones stated it is being updated and will get it to them.

There were no other matters addressed.

There being to further business, the meeting was adjourned.

J. G. "Jamie", Cater, Jr., Mayor

Rona Martin, City Clerk