

UNION CITY MINUTES  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2015  
7:00 P.M.

**Present:** Mayor Vince Williams, Councilmembers Brian Jones, Angelette Mealing and Shayla Nealy, Joyce Robinson, City Attorney Dennis Davenport, City Manager Sonja Fillingame and City Clerk Jacqueline R. Cossey

**Directors:** Tarsha Calloway - Finance, Rhonda Jones – Human Resources, Cedric Clark – Public Services, Chuck Odom – Police Chief, Joe Maddox - Fire Chief, Nicole Dozier – Community Development, Lee Blicht – Parks & Recreation and Trey Bennings – Information Technology

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:10 p.m. by Mayor Williams.

**I. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

Invocation by Pastor Dale Foster

**II. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC TO DISCUSS ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA (2 MIN.)**

At this time Mayor Williams began to hear public comments.

Public comments were made by the following:

Cathy Villard of 4701 Flat Shoals Road spoke regarding the poor upkeep of the landscaping and City right-of-ways.

Sylvester Copeland of 7898 Bluefin Trail spoke regarding Union City and Fulton County Police terrorism.

Jarius McDaniel of 5424 Rock Road spoke regarding his disappointment with Mayor Williams and members of the City Council regarding the Mall.

Curtis Bryant of 5485 Lakeside Drive spoke regarding vandalism and the dumping of trash on closed roads, Lakeside Drive

Minister Stanley Muhammad of 2445 Lake Royale Drive spoke regarding the termination of Police Chief Odom.

Dale Foster of Fairburn, Georgia spoke regarding the 2015 Election and the Ariston Waiters case.

**III. PRESENTATIONS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS OF AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS:**

**1. Swearing-in of Municipal Court Judge Ronald Freeman**

At this time City Clerk Jacqueline Cossey performed the swearing-in of Municipal Court Judge Ronald J. Freeman.

Judge Freeman thanked the Council for the opportunity to serve as judge. He added that he has been a judge since 1991 and he is vested in the community. He further added that his law practice is located on Highway 29 and Roosevelt Highway, Johnson and Freeman Law Firm. Judge Freeman stated that he looks forward to serving the community and everyone will soon find the court to be customer friendly. He added that we have a lot of middle school and high school kids in court so we need a program to divert the kids out of the court system. He further added that he has a book of rules and he cannot be friends with everybody, but he will be fair and everything will be done above board and he looks forward to working with everyone and making sure that justice is served in Union City.

2. Presentation of a Proclamation Recognizing the American Payroll Association

At this time Mayor Williams read aloud the proclamation recognizing the American Payroll Association. The presentation of the proclamation was followed by a photo with the Mayor and Council.

3. Life Save Award Presented to Paramedic Micah Wallace, Firefighter/EMT Wendy Glover, Firefighter/Paramedic Jose Montez and Police Officer William Thomas

Michael Charles, Executive Director of the Better Outcomes Foundation, led this discussion and thanked the Mayor and Council for allowing him to speak. Mr. Charles stated that the leading cause of death in this country is heart disease. He added that 600,000 cardiac arrests occur in this country annually and 400,000 happen outside of the hospital. He further added that in the Metro Atlanta area there were 2700 cardiac arrests. Mr. Charles stated that in 2014, 852 cardiac arrests occurred in Fulton County and there were only 67 survivors. He added that less than 5% have a good outcome and we are here tonight to acknowledge an individual with a good outcome because they are extraordinarily rare.

At this time Mr. Charles asked representatives from the following agencies to come forward: Rural Metro Ambulance and two crew members that transported the survivor, Union City Police Department – William Thomas, Company 41 – Rescuer Wendy Glover, Jose Montez and Michael Wallace

Mr. Charles stated that the reason that the survival rate is so low is due to the lack of immediate by standing CPR and early defibrillation with an AED and that happened in this instance. He added that the person who usually witnesses these cardiac arrests are family members and if the family members begin CPR and early defibrillation, that person's chances of recovery are enhanced.

At this time Mr. Charles asked Ashley Smith and husband Terry Smith to come forward. He added that Mrs. Smith called 911 and Mr. Smith began CPR.

Mr. Charles asked the cardiac arrest survivor, Crystal Carmen of Union City to come forward.

Ms. Carman was received with an overwhelming applause and standing ovation throughout Council Chambers followed by a photo with the Mayor and Council.



Public Services Director Cedric Clark led this discussion and stated that we have had updates regarding this crossing from CSX and GDOT and he has confirmed that no additional improvements will be made at this location. He then stated that he has confirmed that the pavement from the railroad crossing to Westbrook on the south side will be obliterated and grassed and the same will occur on the north side leading to Highway 29, but the track bed will remain.

Public Hearing Opened.

Roslyn Crider of 5037 Dixie Lake Road spoke in opposition of the closure of the crossing.

Billy Bridges of Union Grove Baptist Church spoke in opposition of the closure of the crossing.

Public Hearing Closed.

***On motion of Councilmember Jones seconded by Councilmember Mealing and carried, the Council agreed that the crossing would remain open. Vote was unanimous.***

2. Final adoption of the FY2016 Millage Rate and FY2016 Budget. (Budget Books provided separately)

At this time Mrs. Calloway stated that it is time to adopt the final millage rate. She added that the Council has heard this information before and there will be no changes to the millage rate, 15.692.

Public Hearing Opened.

No one came forward.

Public Hearing Closed.

***On motion of Councilmember Nealy seconded by Councilmember Robinson and carried, the aforementioned millage rate was unanimously approved.***

Mrs. Calloway stated that the Council has reviewed the FY2016 Budget; however there were a few things that needed further discussion. She then shared the following information:

- The tax digest reflects growth
- Where our tax dollars go and percentages
- Calculation of taxes
- All budget totaling \$35,095,669
- General Fund total budget \$18,137,890
- Balanced budget
- Focused on rebuilding Fund Balance
- Fund 215, E-911, Outsourced to Fulton County

- Fund 350 distribution - \$300,000 to Ronald Bridges Park Improvements, \$200,00 to Police Vehicles and \$85,000 to Gateway Improvements
- Fund 505 – Monitoring to become self-sustaining
- Fund 506- Budgeted to finish the meter replacement program

At this time Mrs. Calloway stated that she needs guidance regarding the request from our City Attorney for a rate increase from \$150 per hour to \$175 per hour.

Mayor Williams stated that he is aware of the fact that we have budgeted for a 2% increase for staff, but if possible he would like to come back in six months and make a one-time 3% increase that does not obligate the City.

Mrs. Calloway stated that she can take a look at it mid-year, but right now we have a 2% budgeted. She added that we can revisit an additional 1% in the form of a bonus at mid-year.

Councilmember Jones stated that one of the things that he discussed with the Finance Director was the possibility of an additional 1%, not to exceed \$150,000 for all employees for a one-time bonus.

Mrs. Calloway responded, "That is correct". She added that it is roughly \$150,000 to add another 1%.

Mayor Williams stated for the record that we are working vigorously to make sure that we increase our team's salary because they have worked hard for the past four or five years without a pay increase. He added that we see the need and we know that we have some hard working folks and we want to make sure that we reward them.

Councilmember Mealing asked if we will revisit the bonus in February or March.

Mrs. Calloway stated that it will be closer to March or April to get all of the numbers in.

Councilmember Robinson stated that she wanted to go on the record and state that she is totally in agreement.

Mayor Williams asked how many patrol vehicles do we have in use. He added that he is aware that we have a number of cars and we are getting more, but he would like to know the number of patrol cars that we currently have.

Police Chief Odom stated that we have approximately 45 patrol vehicles.

Mayor Williams stated that he wanted to make sure that we get cars for those officers who are patrolling, not take home vehicles.

Mrs. Calloway stated that she believes that the intent is to obtain patrol cars for that purpose.

***On motion of Councilmember Mealing seconded by Councilmember Jones and carried, the request to increase the City Attorney's hourly rate to \$175 was unanimously approved.***

***On motion of Councilmember Jones seconded by Councilmember Mealing and carried, the FY2016 Budget was unanimously approved.***

Mrs. Calloway requested that the FY2015 Budget be approved via resolution.

At this time Mayor Williams stated that we are approaching campaign season and we usually relieve the campaign sign ordinance.

City Attorney Davenport stated that there is no timeframe issue with the signs, but there is a state law that complements our City ordinance that specifically regulates political advertising.

Mayor William asked, "When".

City Attorney Davenport responded, "There is no time limit". He added that state law allows for bigger signs and more numbers depending on what type of sign it is.

Mayor Williams stated that we are making sure that we do not cause problems with the candidates who are putting their signs out because we know that can be an issue, but if we can relax our campaign sign restriction as long as they are not in the right-of-way until November 6 which is enough time to come and get them.

Council asked for clarity.

Mayor Williams stated that the entire Council has had campaign signs out and in the past we have relaxed the sign ordinance to allow candidates to put their signs out, but for a designated time and after November 6, we have to make sure that the signs are taken up.

Councilmember Mealing stated that the candidates who do not retrieve theirs signs need to be fined.

Mayor Williams stated that if the candidates do not come back by November 6, we will take those signs and recycle them. He then asked the City Attorney if this was fine.

City Attorney Davenport stated that there are no date restrictions in the ordinance.

Mayor Williams stated that we have to make sure that folks are not violating the right-of-way. He added that the candidates should make sure that their signs are picked up by November 6 because they will be recycled.

Councilmember Mealing stated that we should let the candidates know.

Mayor Williams stated that we always do. He added that he has received many calls.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION: None.

City Manager Reports:

Mrs. Fillingame reported the following:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Union City Arts Festival will be held October 24
- Thanks were given to Mrs. Calloway and her team for their stewardship on the budget
- Thanks were given to Rural Metro and Mr. Charles for the Life Savers Awards

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS:

IX. REPORTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR & COUNCIL:

Councilmember Mealing spoke regarding the following:

- Many thanks were given to the residents for attending the meeting and staying engaged
- Congratulations were extended to the Fire Department for Rural Metro
- Thanks were given to the Payroll Association for attending the meeting
- Thanks were given to all of the partners and sponsors for the Back to School Rally (Resurrection House, CLM, Advanced Disposal and Wal-Mart)
- Thanks were given to the Finance Department for a balanced budget
- Thanks were given to staff for all that they do to make Council's job easier

Councilmember Robinson spoke regarding the following:

- Thanks were given to the residents for staying for the entire meeting
- Acknowledgement was given to politicians and the upcoming election
- Thanks were given to the residents who voted for her in the 2013 election
- Recognition was given to previous Councilmembers
- Acknowledgement was given to all departments
- Many thanks were given to the Police Department
- For the Record many thanks were given to Police Chief Odom for his leadership and taking criticism in stride
- Many thanks were given to the Fire Department

Councilmember Nealy spoke regarding the following:

- Thanks were given to the residents for attending another spirited meeting
- Thanks were given to the Finance Department for a balanced budget
- Recognition was given to the fact that Union City is growing
- Thanks was given to staff for a great Back to School Event
- Thanks was given to the Police and Fire Department for a great National Night Out
- Congratulations were extended to Judge Freeman
- Thanks were given to Better Outcome for the life saving efforts and all others involved
- Thanks were given to staff for all that they do

Councilmember Jones spoke regarding the following:

- Thanks were given to Judge Freeman
- Thanks were given to the Police and Fire Department for assisting in saving a life
- Thanks were given to the citizen for making the call to save a life
- Thanks were given to staff for a great National Night Out Event
- Recognition was given to “Next Door” for information on what is happening in the community
- Thanks were given to staff for a great Back to School Rally
- Thanks were given to Mrs. Calloway and all department heads for a balanced budget
- City landscaping and beautification was addressed
- Community participation was solicited to assist in keeping the City clean
- Thanks were given to staff for all events

Mayor Williams spoke regarding the following:

- City landscaping and participation from the community was addressed
- Mr. Clark was instructed to get a few more edgers for the City
- Thanks were given to all of the partners who assisted in the Back to School Rally
- Thanks was given to Resurrection House for providing a medical assistant and free physicals to the kids
- Acknowledgement was given to the passing of Julian Bond
- Acknowledgement was given to the passing of Odell Mashburn, a previous councilmember
- Thanks were given to the residents for coming out
- Thanks were given to staff
- Thanks were given to Mr. Bryant and Bishop Fann for attending the meeting

At this time City Attorney thanked the Mayor and Council for their support in the FY2016 Budget. He added that he looks forward to a successful 2016.

City Attorney Davenport stated that he needed to enter into Executive Session to discuss one item regarding land acquisition and review the Executive Session Minutes from July 21, 2015.

***On motion of Councilmember Mealing seconded by Councilmember Nealy and carried, Council entered into Executive Session to discuss one item regarding land acquisition, and review the Executive Session Minutes from July 21, 2015. Vote was unanimous.***

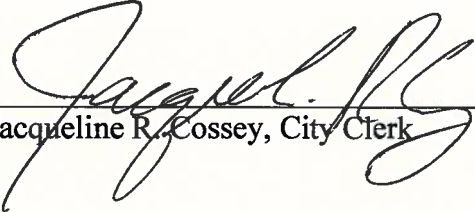
***On motion of Councilmember Mealing seconded by Councilmember Jones and carried, Council reconvened to Regular Session. Vote was unanimous.***

***On motion of Councilmember Jones seconded by Councilmember Mealing and carried, the Executive Session Minutes from July 21, 2015 were unanimously approved.***

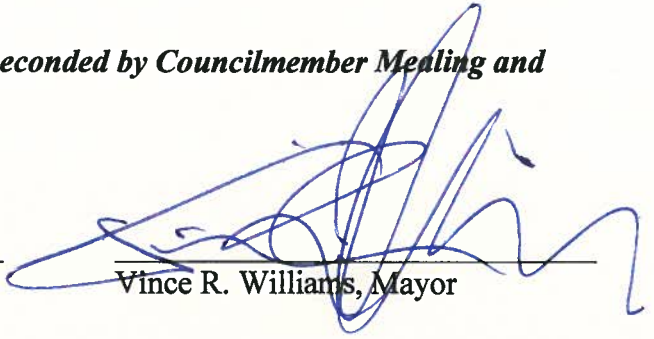


X. ADJOURNMENT:

***On motion of Councilmember Jones, seconded by Councilmember Mealing and carried, the meeting adjourned.***



\_\_\_\_\_  
Jacqueline R. Cossey, City Clerk



\_\_\_\_\_  
Vince R. Williams, Mayor