

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

July 9, 2018

The work session and regular meeting of the Grovetown City Council was held on Monday, July 9, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the council chambers at City Hall. Present were Mayor Gary E. Jones, Councilmember Dennis Trudeau, Councilmember Eric Blair and Councilmember Deborah Fisher. Mayor Pro-tem Sylvia Martin was not present.

Also present were Public Safety Director Scott Wheatley, Leisure and Recreation Services Director Janet Wheatley, Human Resource Manager Elaine Matthews, Planning and Development Director Scott Sterling, Raymond Hinton in the absence of Public Works Director Michael Woods, Finance Director Bradley Smith, City Attorney Chris Dube, City Administrator John Waller and City Clerk Roxanne Brown.

Council conducted a work session to review agenda items at 6:00 p.m.

1.

Call Meeting to Order/Announcement of Quorum

Mayor Jones called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and acknowledged a quorum was present.

2.

Invocation

The invocation was given by Councilmember Blair.

3.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Mayor Jones led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

4.

Approval of Agenda

Councilmember Trudeau made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilmember Blair seconded the motion, all in favor and the motion carried.

5.

Approval of June Regular Minutes

Councilmember Trudeau made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 11, 2018 regular council meeting. Councilmember Blair seconded the motion, all in favor and the motion carried.

6.

Approval of June Special Called Meeting Minutes

Councilmember Trudeau made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 20, 2018 special called meeting. Councilmember Blair seconded the motion, all in favor and the motion carried.

7.

Approval of June Special Called Meeting Executive Session Minutes

Councilmember Blair made a motion to approve the June 20, 2018 special called meeting executive session minutes. Councilmember Fisher seconded the motion, all in favor and the motion carried.

8.

Committee Chair Reports

Public Safety

Councilmember Blair reported 744 calls for Public Safety and 67 calls for Fire/EMS. He thanked everyone who worked during the July 4th BBQ. He reported that fire hydrant testing will be completed this month. He reported that National Nite Out/Back to School Bash will be held on Friday August 3rd at 6:00 p.m. at Liberty Park and the annual Department of Public Safety golf tournament will be held at Jones Creek on September 7th at 8:00 a.m.

Councilmember Blair reported that he and other officers met with the District Attorney to discuss the increase in crime in the City. He said that there are still openings for two road patrol officers and one dispatcher in the Department of Public Safety.

Utility Billing and Public Works

Councilmember Fisher referred her report to Raymond Hinton who provided the department report later in the meeting.

Planning and Development

Councilmember Trudeau announced that the variance submitted by T.O. Investments, LLC (Ivey Group) for the Joiner Crossing 2 residential development were approved and construction on this project should begin in August. He also discussed easement acquisition for the wastewater treatment plant project.

Leisure and Recreation Services

Councilmember Martin was not present.

Administration

Mayor Jones referred his report to City Administrator John Waller.

9.

Financial Statement

Councilmember Trudeau made a motion to approve the Financial Statement. Councilmember Blair seconded the motion, all in favor and the motion carried.

10.

Public Announcements

Councilmember Fisher stated when she was first elected, she toured the City with Public Works Director Mike Woods and that the Department of Public Works is the heart of the City. She said that all City workers serve as an integral part of our City. Councilmember Fisher asked that the public refrain from using social media, to include Facebook, to complain about the workers who are doing their best to perform a critical, challenging job. She recommended that citizens who have complaints contact the City Administrator, the Director of Public Works, or a Council Member.

11.

Citizens Comments

Carla Harrison addressed the upgrade of the job description for the Director of Leisure and Recreation Services and related change of the position to Grade 20 on the City's pay plan. Ms Harrison also discussed the need for employee raises in other departments.

Allen Transou questioned how there would be salary increases without a millage rate increase.

City Administrator John Waller said that the departments are performing well managing their budgets. He also stated that the City's portion of the Local Option Sales Tax had increased to 11% from 9% on January 1, 2018, and that there has been a significant increase in the number of business licenses issued this year which provides adequate revenue for the salary recommendations on the meeting agenda. City Administrator Waller further stated that the City will be able to cover the increased costs without resorting to the use of reserves funds.

Mr. Transou stated that firefighters and police officers should be the City's top priority.

12.

General Business: Unfinished

12A.

Recommend Approval of Ordinance 2018-06-01 – Rezoning Four Parcels on Robin Lane From C-2 (1 Parcel) and R-1 (3 Parcels) to R-4 – Second Reading

Councilmember Trudeau made a motion accept the second reading and to adopt Ordinance 2018-06-01. Councilmember Fisher seconded the motion, all in favor and the motion carried. The affected parcel ID Numbers are: 062 071 (C2 Commercial); 062 072, 062 72A and 062 072B (all R1 Residential), all of which are now zoned R4.

13.

General Business: New

13A.

Recommendation to Adopt Columbia County's Updated Plan on Handling Animals During a Disaster

Councilmember Blair made a motion to adopt Columbia County's updated plan on handling animals during a disaster. Councilmember Trudeau seconded the motion, all in favor and the motion carried.

13B.

Recommend Implementation of the Results of the Salary Study

Councilmember Fisher described three recommendations coming out of the recent salary study: 1) a pay grade increase from Grade 19 to Grade 20 for the Director of Leisure and Recreation Service, effective August 1, 2018; 2) effective the next pay period, ending July 13, 2018, seventeen of the lowest earning employees receive a 5% increase in pay; and 3) effective January 1, 2019, all employees except those hired after January 1, 2018 and the City Administrator – who does not fall under the standard employee salary structure – receive a 2.5% of a step increase in pay.

Councilmember Fisher then made a motion to approve these three recommendations. Councilmember Trudeau seconded the motion, all in favor and the motion carried.

13C.

Presentation on the Need to Add Additional Firefighters – Councilmember Blair

Councilmember Blair provided a presentation on the need to hire additional firefighters in the Department of Public Safety. He stated the City needs to ensure the firefighters have the equipment they need to effectively perform their jobs. He reviewed the department's mission statement and provided an overview of the current personnel status.

Councilmember Blair also discussed the City's ISO current rating which is 3. He would like to reduce the ISO rating to a 2 through an increase in manpower and equipment. A reduction in the ISO rating will decrease insurance premiums for homeowners.

Councilmember Blair reviewed the goals of the department and the call volume statistics for 2015, 2016 and 2017. He also discussed the City's limitations including the lack of an ambulance in the City and the City's inability at the present time to qualify for state grants.

Councilmember Blair recommended the City hire two additional firefighters in the 2019 fiscal year at an estimated annual cost of \$100,000 and a training officer at an estimated annual cost of \$60,000. He stated the estimated cost of the equipment for these new positions is \$60,000.

He requested the council to invest in public safety.

13D.

Recommendation to Upgrade Job Description of the Director of Recreation and Leisure Services and Re-rate from a Grade 19 to a Grade 20

Councilmember Trudeau made a motion to approve the modified job description and pay upgrade for position of Director, Department of Recreation and Leisure Services which now has responsibility for all City facilities maintenance. The result of the modified duty description and increased responsibility merited the position of Director, Department of Recreation and Leisure Services, a re-rating from Grade 19, \$20.94 per hour, to a Grade 20, \$22.00 per hour. Councilmember Fisher seconded the motion, all in favor and the motion carried.

14.

Director's Reports

Directors briefed the Council on recent activities of their respective Departments.

15.

Adjourn

Councilmember Blair made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. Councilmember Fisher seconded the motion, all in favor and the motion carried.

Gary E. Jones, Mayor

Sylvia Martin, Mayor Pro-tem

Eric Blair, Councilmember

Dennis Trudeau, Councilmember

Deborah Fisher, Councilmember

Attest:

Roxanne Brown, City Clerk