

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
GOODLETTSVILLE CITY COMMISSION

Date: June 12, 2003

Time: 6:30 pm

Place: City Hall

Present: Bobby Jones, Johnny Long, Jerry Garrett, Jim Driver, Jeff Cordell

Also Present: David Wilson, Joe Haynes, Jim Thomas, John Wright, Bill Terry, Tommy DeLoach, Jack Hunnicutt, Phillip Gibson, Terry Hutcherson, Richard Pope, Phillip Uldrich, Claudia Davis, Bill Brasier, Bennie Lane, Helen Hitt, Don and Molly Barnes, Sammy Uldrich, Ray Hunter, Dean Birdwell, Bettye and Glen Freudenthal, Ken Hale, Rick Peery, Geri Peterson, Jennifer Johnson, Charlie and Sherrie Morrow, Albert Vincent, Tim and Stacey Preston, Bill and Mary Vaughn, John and Melanie Draughon, Jimmy Driver, Ken Jenkins, Jay Luthery, Pam Garrett, Owen Sanders, Tom Mosier, Rick Judkins, Sr., Jane Birdwell, Jeff and Ginny Jeffrey, John Finch, Mike and Linda Moss, Gilda York, Alford Roby, Peggy Dailey, Jill Garrett, Linda Eller, David Calhoun, Jack Benz, Judy Vecchione, Jeff Rice, Bob Groeger, Jimmy Cantrell, Doris Ruskin, John and Grayson Cannon, Susan Rotkiewicz, Beverly Woodard, Jim McClain, Bob Erwin, Jr., Jim and Teresa Galbreath, Lester Hardison, Kim Sutton, Jake Holt, Chuck Woosley, Robert McCain, Vicki Wilson, Jim Anderson, Linda Driver, Sissy Thomas, Gary Manning, Leona Moyers.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Jones. Prayer was offered by Pastor Roby. The Mayor welcomed attendees and gave instructions for speaking during the public hearing items. Motion was made by Long, seconded by Cordell, to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2003 regular meeting. Passed 5-0.

Consider an amendment to the Personnel Policies & Procedures Manual to reflect the proposal of Vice-Mayor Long to change the manner in which vacation and sick leave are administered for the Police and Fire Departments. Garrett made a motion to defer this item until the July 10 meeting and asked the staff to do a detailed study, including polling other cities about their policy on this issue, stating he is not prepared to vote on this item at this time. The motion was seconded by Long. Driver stated this involves how Fire and Police have calculated sick and vacation time since July 1, 1999, stating there have been no complaints and no requests to change the way time off has been computed during that four years. Driver made a motion that the original motion to defer be tabled, seconded by Cordell. Driver and Cordell voted in favor and Garrett, Long and Jones opposed. Defeated 3-2. Garrett stated any decision made on this issue will not effect the vacation and sick time accrual schedule for all employees as specified in the Personnel Policies & Procedures Manual. Driver questioned what policy will be in effect if this is not acted upon, noting the current procedure is not a part of the Personnel Policies Manual but rather an administrative procedure which could be changed. The original motion to defer passed 3-2 with Garrett, Jones and Long voting in favor and Driver and Cordell opposed. Haynes stated the current policy and procedure would be in effect as of July 1, 2003 if no action to change it is taken by the Commission.

Public Hearing of intent to exceed certified tax rate for the year 2003 property tax. John Wright stated whenever there is a general reappraisal of property values, normally increasing the value, state law requires that we determine the tax rate that, when applied to that increased value, would give the same revenue as the year before. When the value goes up, generally the tax rate needs to go down., Once you determine what that rate is which is around \$.22 for this year, then the state law requires that you cannot set your tax rate above that unless you have a public hearing. We are complying to that part of the law that requires a public hearing before we set any tax rate above \$.22. The Mayor declared the public hearing open. Jim Anderson stated it seems the budget needs to be reviewed first before making a determination of whether it is necessary to increase the rate. He is concerned about property values and the effect of elderly citizens. The Mayor stated Metro has not given us the rate yet, which is normally after the budget deadline, therefore they have to use a realistic projection to approve the

budget before July 1.

Consider Ordinance No. 03-633, an ordinance of the City of Goodlettsville adopting a budget and establishing a property tax rate for the fiscal year July 1, 2003, through June, 2004. Garrett reviewed the financial position of the City since 1958. As a result of a Metro audit last year of state sales tax distribution, it was determined that the City of Goodlettsville had received \$600,000 that should have been distributed to Metro. In addition to this loss, the City had to repay Metro for \$600,000 for the prior year which had to come out of the current year's budget. The reductions in the state shared taxes to local governments is an additional financial loss. Thirdly, there has been a drastic decline in retail sales in our area which results in \$1.5 Million less forecasted revenue for 2004. With these drastic reductions in revenue, surplus funds have been depleted. The objectives in this budget process have been to try to rebuild some of our surplus, maintain the current level of services with the priority being in public safety, and to not eliminate positions. There are eight employees retiring and those positions will not be filled but there have been no lay offs. The Mayor declared the public hearing open.

Jim Anderson stated there seems to be a budget crunch but questioned whether the public would prefer to had rather not have the significant increase in capital expenditures rather than have their property taxes increased.

Pam Garrett commended the Commission for the critical tough decisions they must make and stated she is in favor of raising the property taxes to \$.70 or even more. She asked that they be cautious and creative with the disbursement of tourism funds.

Richard Judkins stated he has lived her for 29 years and one of the reasons has been the reasonable tax rate. He feels the increase is unreasonable and if he lost half his salary he would have to cut expenses.

Vicki Wilson stated she is in favor of the tax increase to accommodate all the wonderful services the city provides but she encouraged the Commission to make the employees the top priority, stating the city's employees have been asked to give up some of their benefits and she feels the citizens who receive the services should pay for the services, not the employees of the City. She encouraged the Commission to keep Rivergate Mall and all the retail businesses vital and hopes the issues with the Chamber can be resolved.

Q. C. Fryer, former City Manger, stated he was present when the Hotel Motel Tax legislation was adopted with the provision that these funds would be applied to tourism and excluded from the General Fund. He reminded the Commission that this tax needs to be spent on tourism and the Chamber of Commerce is the best agency to promote tourism in Goodlettsville.

Richard Pope, a lifelong resident, stated the residents of the City should pay for the services they receive by a property tax increase which should be sufficient to continue the current quality of services.

Grayson Cannon, 17 year resident, asked the Commission to please raise her property taxes. As Chair of the Chamber of Commerce, the former grants to the Chamber have enabled them to have a professional paid staff to achieve the Chamber goals. They promote Goodlettsville which ultimately benefits us all both in tourism funds by hotel taxes and general revenue funds when tourists shop and eat here. She feels the Chamber funding from Hotel Motel Tax funds is appropriate, referencing a couple large notebooks expressly documenting the Chambers recent promotions of tourism activities. She encouraged the Commission to fund the Chamber grant again this year.

David Calhoun, resident since 1996, after retiring from the military, stated the Chamber directly effected their decision to live here and is a vital resource to help promote his business. He encouraged support of the Chamber and favors the property tax increase.

John Cannon agreed that raising property taxes is the right thing to do. As past President of the Chamber, he asked the Commission to reconsider funding the grant to the Chamber, citing it is the single most visible and active organization in the City to promote tourism and economic development. They played an enormous role in bringing IBP and Dollar General Corporation here. Tourist activities they promote produce revenue paid by the tourists, not the residents. As Chairman of the Planning Board, he deals with long range issues for growth in the City. Loosing the Chamber would be a loss to 400 business members and a revenue loss this City cannot afford, shortsighting and hurting every aspect of the City's future.

Gary Manning, 25 plus year member of the Chamber, pays residential and commercial property taxes, business taxes, provides local option taxes, etc., but stated his purpose is to speak for the City employees. No one should be more aware of the economic problems facing this country than the members of the Chamber as business owners. He stated that we should all learn to live within budget constraints and we have to recover from business losses. As business people, the "Chamber" needs to recover from this loss to their funds. Our City employees have been asked to maintain the status quo, to take a cut in benefits, and to take a cut in matching funds for their retirement funds. He feels the City should adopt a plan for the use of the Hotel Motel Tax revenue like Metro Nashville where 1/3 goes to the Chamber, 1/3 goes to the General Fund, and 1/3 goes to existing funds that the City provides for tourism. When economic times are good, the Chamber would get more money. When times are not as good, the Chamber would get less revenue. He stated he is in favor of the property tax increase.

Jeff Rice, next year's Chairman of the Chamber and officer at Dollar General Corporation, complimented the Commission for their tough decisions. He encouraged funding the Chamber again from tourism funds. It was the Chamber and the City who lured Dollar General Corporation here, with over 700 employees who spend retail dollars here. He hopes the City and Chamber will continue to work together.

Kim Sutton, lifelong resident and former City Manager's wife, stated she is totally in favor of raising property taxes, however she disagreed with reducing employee benefits and asked that the Commission reconsider those cuts.

The Mayor declared the public hearing closed. Motion was made by Garrett to approve Ordinance No. 03-633 on first reading, seconded by Long. Driver made a motion to amend the original motion, reducing the salary of the Mayor from \$6,000 to \$4,000 and the Commissioners from \$5,400 to \$3,500. The motion died for lack of a second. Cordell stated he has a lot of problems with budget issues including the fire and police vacation time, the Chamber, the Help Center, and the area schools. Cordell made a motion to amend the original motion to delete all Commissioner salaries, seconded by Driver. The motion failed 2-3 with Cordell and Driver in favor and Long, Garrett and Jones opposed. The original motion to approve Ordinance No. 03-633 on first reading passed 4-1 with Garrett, Long, Driver and Cordell in favor and Driver opposed.

Garrett expressed appreciation to all the emergency personnel for the professional manner in which his wife was cared for in a recent auto accident.

Cordell thanked and expressed his respect to Grayson Cannon and all the concerned citizens who had written letters regarding the budget issues and signed their names, adding he did not appreciate the gutless unsigned notes attached to mailboxes in Twelve Stones and Indian Hills.

Gary Manning noted with regards to the Fire and Police personnel sick and vacation time, he felt if an employees works twelve hours they should have twelve hours off. Long stated he agreed and that the

issue being discussed will not cut their time off but they would be paid hour for hour. Driver stated there is no way to figure if this would result in any savings to the City.

Jim Anderson stated he would not be in favor of decreasing any benefits for emergency personnel.

Ken Hale questioned the vacation and sick hour issue. Garrett stated he would not be in favor of any plan that will reduce their time. The number of banked hours could be effected.

Leona Moyers, 40 plus year resident, stated it has been a mistake to not raise taxes in small amounts in the past. The large increase will be a burden on senior citizens and young families. She praised the Police, Fire and Public Works Departments for their excellent performance.

Richard Pope, 31 year employee, commended each department in the budget process for the cuts they have taken and noted that each city employee will be making significant sacrifices in this budget. The City's excellent reputation is a result of the City's dedicated employees. He added he works a traditional eight hour shift and is not effected by the time off computation issue, but that he supports the current procedure remaining unchanged.

Kim Sutton reviewed the powers of the Commissioners and how those powers are to be executed based on the charter. She stated they are elected by the citizens to hire and manage a City Manager and it is his job to oversee the department heads. She encouraged Commissiones to stay out of the day to day operations of the City and avoid causing turmoil and promoting personal agendas. She again encouraged the Commission to care about and provide for the city employees.

Jim Thomas, resident of Robertson County, stated the low tax rate is a draw for him to be looking for property here and he thought the taxes should not be raised.

Robert McCain, lifelong resident, thanked Garrett for his explanation of the budget crisis and reasons to raise his taxes, stating he has full confidence in the tough decisions they are having to make. He also encouraged them to keep the attitude of the employees high, and supports the spirit of keeping them happy. He noted the great job the Chamber does and by the representation they had at this meeting, he encouraged the Chamber and City to work even more together to promote new business in our city.

Jim McCain, resident, suggested there should be more concern by citizens to go to their county and request more services for their property tax dollars. He stated the City's funds come from it's citizens and he challenged the Commission to use them wisely.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.



Claudia Davis, City Recorder



Bobby Jones, Mayor