

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF AUSTELL
MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2013**

Present: Mayor Joe Jerkins
Kirsten Anderson
Trudie Causey
Martin Standard
Scott Thomas
Suzanne Thompson

Absent: Virginia Reagan

The regular meeting of the Mayor and the City Council was held on Monday, April 1, 2013 at 7:00 P.M. at City Hall.

Also present were: Scott Kimbrough, City Attorney; Carolyn Duncan, City Clerk; Sandra Farmer, Deputy City Clerk; General Administration; Denise Soesbee, Finance Director; Randy Bowens, Public Works Director; Jim Graham, Community Development Director; Tim Williams, Fire Chief; and Bob Starrett, Police Chief.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Jerkins called the meeting to order. Scott Kimbrough gave the Invocation and Mayor Jerkins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Jerkins asked the Council if they had any items to add to the Agenda. Ms. Thomason stated she would like to add 13A. – Surplus 11’ X 9’ Walk in Cooler.

Ms. Causey moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Jerkins to add the item to the Agenda. Seconded by Mr. Thomas. Motion passed (5-0).

2. CONSENT AGENDA – INFORMATION AND UPDATE

(No Action Required by Council – See Specific Department Director before Meeting.)

3. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve Bills
- B. Approve Legal Bills \$1,225.00
- C. Approve Minutes of Regular Council Meeting March 4, 2013

Ms. Anderson moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Jerkins to approve the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Mr. Thomas. Motion passed (5-0).

4. EXCEPTION TO CONSENT AGENDA

5. CITIZENS REPORT

Mayor Jerkins asked if anyone would like to speak to the Mayor and Council. No one spoke.

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**6. GAS SYSTEM REPRESENTATIVE
JOE JERKINS**

Mr. Kimbrough attended the meeting last Thursday night and everything is going well. They stated it was the best March they could find on record. One of the days last week was the highest volume day. We had a really good March and we are getting back on track and recovery from what it was this time last time.

**7. FINANCE DEPARTMENT
VIRGINIA REAGAN, CHAIRPERSON
Denise Soesbee, Finance Director**

A. Financial Report

**8. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION
KIRSTEN ANDERSON, CHAIRPERSON
Carolyn Duncan, Director**

A. No Report

**9. POLICE DEPARTMENT
VIRGINIA REAGAN, CHAIRPERSON
Bob Starrett, Police Chief**

A. Police Report

B. Code Enforcement Report

Mayor Jerkins asked if anyone had any questions on this. Ms. Causey stated she had several businesses that we have taken pictures of and written up and they have been written up before. Ms. Causey asked Mr. Graham about Sam's Tire and what the zoning was for that area and can they have outside storage on the property. Mr. Graham stated it is zoned General Commercial. The ordinance states no outside storage but we have a lot of them violating this ordinance. Ms. Causey agreed. Ms. Causey stated with the outside storage and working on vehicles outside is this allowed. Mr. Graham stated, no it is not allowed. Ms. Causey stated we have made some pictures of Sam's Tire. James Tire has cleaned theirs up and it looks really nice but it is a shame when you drive down Veterans

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Memorial Highway and see Sam's Tire because it looks horrible. I have pictures if you would like to look at them. Mr. Standard stated Sam's Tire has pieces of cars and other places do have whole cars they are working on. Ms. Causey stated I think it is time we start doing something about these places. We also have an auto broker down behind what used to be the old Georgia Power building. We have another place Austell Collision and they have tons of outside storage. Ms. Causey asked Ms. Duncan how long does it take if we give these places ten days and they don't follow the procedures then how long will it take to get them on the Court docket. Ms. Duncan stated once they get the citation whatever the date is on the ticket that would be the date they have to appear in court. We have been trying to have those once a month as necessary so as they would not fall on an arraignment night and they would fall on a trial night for ease of handling it. It could be as soon as the next trial night or it could be the next one depending on what time of the month it has been written. Ms. Causey stated so there should not be a long procedure for hearing these out. I think it's time we make a move and clean some of these places up because it is truly an eyesore in our City and I don't know how everybody else feels but it is a problem. M. Thomason stated the people beside me are selling their house and they think they have it under contract today after dropping the price twice. I would like to tell you what the realtor has told them. The number one thing they asked is the area safe? They assured the realtor it was a safe City and living next door to a Council Member. They talked about the downtown area and how bad it looked. They said the buildings looked like they were going to fall in. On the other end of where I live you have the duplexes in Douglas County and we can't do anything about that. So these realtors were trying to decide if they were going to bring someone to show this house if they would come by the duplexes in Douglas County or bring them through downtown Austell. It took them awhile to sell their house and do some convincing and like I said they had to lower their price twice to get it there. One of the realtors came in to look at the house and said if we had your home and put it in Powder Springs you could get what you are asking for it. That is a shame they would move one city over to get what they wanted for their house. This is what our property values are like and this is what the real estate agents and the people coming to see the house are saying. I agree with Ms. Causey it is time we clean up, clean up the businesses downtown and cleanup the neighborhoods. My neighborhood doesn't look bad of course the house next door burned down which was an accident and everybody understood that and something will happen with that one. I don't live in a bad neighborhood and for them to come in and say if we pick up your house and move it to Powder Springs then you could get what you wanted for it. That is pretty sad.

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Mayor Jerkins stated he did not agree with that because Powder Springs has some of the same problem areas we have. Ms. Thomason stated yes, they have some of the same problems. Mayor Jerkins stated he did not agree with what the realtor said. Ms. Thomason stated the realtor came out several times and they said we need to do something with the downtown area. They were bringing people through the downtown area and everyone wanted to know if the City was safe and they assured them it was. I don't know where that question came from because our City doesn't look unsafe. I think we need to do something about it and we have this property over here on 2046 Vanessa Circle that was turned in over seven weeks ago. I want you to look at this mess these people have to look at every day and nothing has been done on this. You have two pickup trucks in the back yard that you can see from the street and we didn't even go in the driveway. Junk underneath the carport, junk piled between the two vehicles. Mayor Jerkins asked Chief Starrett if they had been over there. Ms. Thompson stated nothing has been moved since the last time I was over there. Mayor Jerkins stated let Code Enforcement write them a citation. Ms. Causey stated it was time. There is one on the report they complied with and it is an empty house and it has boarded up windows and the yard hasn't been touched. Ms. Anderson asked is this the house up on the hill. Ms. Thomson stated, yes it is. Ms. Anderson stated she spoke with him for quite awhile and he was trying to clean some stuff up when I talked to him. His mother had just died like a month ago and his wife has been very ill. He is obviously not healthy whatsoever, he is very overweight. He says he does know it is a mess and he has been trying to clean it up. Whenever those complaints were written up it was probably the week after. Ms. Causey stated these photographs were taken on Friday. Ms. Anderson stated I don't know if Code Enforcement has been out there but maybe they need to go once or twice a week. Like I said he was out there trying to clean it up and obviously he is not healthy. I don't know if they have any children or not I didn't ask. Mr. Standard stated we have several properties that to the owners it is an overwhelming burden to clean it up. It is because we let it get that way. Some of these properties didn't happen overnight it happened over years and years of being ignored by Code Enforcement. Where it has accumulated till they don't know how to get rid of all the stuff. This is one problem we have that we need to address. Yes, we can work with people but if they are not getting it done you need to something and make them aware you have responsibilities if you own property one way or another. Ms. Thomason stated she had one more complaint to turn in. This one is at 2125 Vanessa Circle they have a vehicle in the yard parked with an expired tag and a trailer parked in the yard. They have junk all down the side of the house.

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It can be seen from the street and the back yard looks awful. You do not have to go in the backyard to see the mess between them and their next door neighbor. The backyard looks awful. I will not stop complaining even if I have to bring a different property every time because people are stopping us and telling us they want something done. When they tell us they want something done I will come here and tell you we need to do something.

10. FIRE DEPARTMENT

**SCOTT THOMAS, CHAIRPERSON
Tim Williams, Fire Chief**

A. Fire Report

11. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

**KIRSTEN ANDERSON, CHAIRPERSON
Randy Bowens, Director**

A. No Report

12. PARKS DEPARTMENT

**SCOTT THOMAS, CHAIRPERSON
Jim Graham, Director**

A. Global Sport Authority, Inc. Revised Ball Fields Lease Agreement
Mr. Thomas stated each one of you have a revised copy of the Lease Agreement.

Mr. Thomas moved to follow the recommendation of the Parks Committee to approve the revised Lease Agreement. Seconded by Ms. Thomason. Motion approved (5-0).

13. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

**SUZANNE THOMASON, CHAIRPERSON
Jim Graham, Director**

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A. Surplus 11' X 9' Walk In Cooler

Ms. Thomason stated the City of Austell Community Affairs Committee recommends approval of the surplus of one 11' x 9' walk in cooler. The Community Affairs Committee also recommends donating the walk in cooler to the Community Health Center, Inc. located at 6289 Veterans Memorial Highway, Suite 12C, Austell, Georgia 30106. The Community Health Center, Inc. was formed by C.A.M.P. in 2004 to provide medical and dental care to lower income individuals.

Ms. Thomason moved to follow the recommendation of the Community Affairs Committee to approve donating the 11' x 9' Walk In Cooler to the Community Health Center, Inc. Seconded by Mr. Thomas. Motion passed (5-0).

14. ATTORNEY, DUPREE & KIMBROUGH

A. No Report

15. MAYOR'S REPORT

A. CMA MEETING

NO MEETING

TIME:

LOCATION:

B. Proclamation – Girl Scouts of America

Ms. Causey moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Jerkins to approve the Proclamation for the Girls Scouts of America. Seconded by Mr. Thomas. Motion passed (5-0).

C. Election Ordinance

Mayor Jerkins stated Mr. Kimbrough is still making corrections to this ordinance so we need to table this item.

Ms. Anderson moved to follow the recommendation to table the Election Ordinance. Seconded by Mr. Thomas. Motion passed (5-0).

16. ADJOURN

Mr. Thomas moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Jerkins to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ms. Causey. Motion passed (5-0).