

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF AUSTELL
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2015**

Present: Mayor Joe Jerkins
Kirsten Anderson
Ollie Clemson
Randy Green
Scott Thomas
Suzanne Thomason

The regular meeting of the Mayor and Council was held on Monday, November 2, 2015, 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 Affairs Director; Pat Maxwell, Fire Chief and Bob Starrett, Police Chief.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Jerkins called the meeting to order and Reverend David Pearce gave the Invocation. Mayor Jerkins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Jerkins asked if anyone would like to add items to the Agenda. Mr. Thomas stated he would like to revise 12A. – Virginia Reagan Memorial Bench at Mayors Memorial Park. Mr. Thomas stated Item 12A is already on the Agenda. No motion needed.

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 \$2,295.00
- C. Approve Minutes of Regular Council Meeting October 5, 2015

Mr. Green moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Jerkins to approve the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Ms. Thomason. 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. Ms. Kimberly Willingham-Warner stated her name and stated she would like an update on the abatements. Mr. Kimbrough stated we have three of them to be filed and hopefully for a December date and I will get with Ms. Duncan on this.

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I don't know if this one is in your subdivision it is a slab that is on the property and they are supposed to be building a home on that property. I am waiting to hear back on this. Ms. Warner asked so the three that are being done in December are in addition to the ones that were done a month or two ago. Mr. Kimbrough stated no, they are the same ones because I was trying to get them done all together. We have about five ready to go. But, I was trying to find these other people the two that are not going to be filed. We will go ahead and do the three and we are still dealing with the one with the slab from earlier in the year. Mayor Jerkins asked if anyone else would like to speak to the Mayor and Council.

Ms. Annette Morales stated her name and stated she lived on Love Street. Ms. Morales stated she was concerned about a tree that is next to her house. I was told it was going to be taken out. It had to be approved and I guess you remember coming to look at the tree. They did come by and chopped it up and left it. It is obviously dead and it is falling now and we have just been missed several times with the limbs falling off. It is really a hazard and people are walking there all the time. I am just concerned about it. Plus, we are in the middle of town and we have that old falling down building and what is going on with that. It has been that way for two or three years. I don't understand what is going on with our town.

Mayor Jerkins stated he would explain the building to her. The owner gave us that building and we bought two buildings. We are in the process of putting a new roof on it and we are getting bids on this part of it right now on two of the buildings. One of them we are getting to start working on is the one on Front Street. The City bought the other two buildings about two months ago. It takes time to get bids and we can't just jump out there and start working on them without the bid process being completed. We haven't owned them but about two months. Ms. Morales stated it was her understanding the City owned them all. We bought two of the buildings and they gave us one of the buildings. We will put a roof on the building something similar to the City Hall roof. This takes time and we haven't owned these buildings that long. We are working on these as fast as we can. Paving will be done behind the shopping center we will resurface it. Mayor Jerkins asked Mr. Bowens what is the status on the tree. Mr. Bowens asked Ms. Morales what her address was. Ms. Morales stated her address as 5939 Love Street. Mr. Bowens stated we will have to close the road down to get the remainder of the climbs on the tree and take the remainder of the tree down. We did cut the ones we thought were hazardous. We will get back out there as soon as grass cutting season is over. Our efforts have been focusing on a lot of the overhangs and a lot of the dead trees. Ms. Thomason stated some the limbs fell off last night as I saw it when I came to work this morning. There was a big chunk of a limb lying in the road.

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Ms. Morales stated the limbs are constantly in my drive-way. We are on an easement and both houses use that drive-way and people walk up and down the street all the time. This was my concern when I called the City was that you guys are just open for a big lawsuit because someone is going to get hurt. Ms. Morales stated she was so pleased that Mr. Bowens responded like he did when she called. Then nothing, because it has been months. Mr. Bowens stated we have been focused on the grass cutting. Ms. Morales stated she understood. When fall arrives and the leaves start falling off that is when we start cutting down limbs. We will come back out there and address the situation. Ms. Morales asked Mr. Bowens if he had seen the tree. Mr. Bowens stated he just rode down there last Thursday. Ms. Morales stated the tree is completely white. The bark on it is white and obviously there something wrong with the tree. There is a beautiful tree right next to it and this one is just diseased. Mayor Jerkins stated Mr. Bowens will see that the situation is taken care of. Mr. Bowens stated we have an aerial bucket, but we do not take it up in thunder storms or rainy weather because of hazardous situations like this. We will be back out there as soon as possible. Ms. Morales stated o.k. and I hope it is before someone gets hurt. Mayor Jerkins asked if anyone else would like to speak to the Council. No one else spoke.

**6. GAS SYSTEM REPRESENTATIVE
JOE JERKINS**

Mr. Clemons attended the Gas Board Meeting and he stated everything is going well. The prediction is for a colder and wetter winter. The Auditor attended the meeting and had a clean report.

**7. FINANCE DEPARTMENT
JOE JERKINS – CO-CHAIRPERSON
Denise Soesbee – Director**

A. Financial Report

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

A. Health Insurance Renewal for 2015 – 2016 – United Health Care

Ms. Anderson stated the Mayor, Carolyn Duncan and Sandy Farmer met with our Broker, Chip Boyd, and Amy Kraus with Heritage Corporate Benefits.

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Also present was Mark Bailey and Jamie Monk with United Health Care
And they have proposed two different plans for the City through United Health
Care as well as prescription coverage.

The Plans have changed slightly as we will offer an HMO-ZZ-4 Navigate Plan
and the POS Plan.

We have been advised the new rate will be effective January 1, 2016, and will
remain in place until December 31, 2016. Please see the Premium Calculations
below. The Premium for the Employee will be considerably less.

**PROPOSED JAN. 1, 2016–DECEMBER 31, 2016 WKLY. & MONTHLY PREMIUMS–POS
PLAN**

Employee Pays	Per Month	City Pays	Total
Employee \$7.50/Per Week	\$32.50/Per Month	\$636.68	\$669.18
Employee+Sp \$84.24	\$365.04/Per Month	\$973.32	\$1,338.36
Employee+Ch \$84.24/Per Week	\$365.04/Per Month	\$973.32	\$1,338.36
Family \$103.93	\$450.36/Per Month	\$1,557.18	\$2,007.54

PROPOSED JAN. 1, 2016–DECEMBER 31, 2016 WKLY.&MONTHLY PREMIUMS–HMO PLAN

Employee Pays	Per Month	City Pays	Total
Employee \$7.50/Per Week	\$32.50/Per Month	\$533.68	\$566.18
Employee + Sp \$84.30/Per Week	\$365.30/Per Month	\$767.06	\$1,132.36
Employee + Ch \$84.30/Per Week	\$365.30/Per Month	\$711.28	\$1,076.58
Family \$101.16/Per Week	\$438.36/Per Month	\$1,260.18	\$1,698.54

We feel this is an excellent quote from United Health Care considering our Claims
Experience in the past year has been considerably higher with GMA and they had an
increase of 15%. It is the recommendation of the General Administration Committee that
Mayor and Council approve the Health Insurance Renewal as required.

*Ms. Anderson moved to follow the recommendation of the General Administration
Committee to approve the Health Insurance Renewal. Seconded by Mr. Thomas. Motion
passed (5-0).*

Mayor Jerkins asked if anyone had any questions. Ms. Thomason asked what the
deductibles would be for 2016. Mr. Chip Boyd stated the deductibles are the same on the
POS which is \$1000.00 and the HMO will go up from \$150.00 to \$500.00. The City has
utilized the Health Reimbursement Account for the last several years to offset the
deductibles. The City will offset the entire deductible as they have done in the past years.

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Mayor Jerkins stated the employees cost per week will be \$7.50 per week for both plans and the City will reimburse the employee only for the deductible for Inpatient and Outpatient surgery only. Ms. Thomason asked if we were still doing the Telemedicine. Mayor Jerkins stated yes, we are and it is a separate policy.

**9. POLICE DEPARTMENT
MAYOR JERKINS – CO – CHAIRPERSON
Bob Starrett, Police Chief**

A. Police Report

B. Code Enforcement Report

Ms. Thomason stated she had a comment about One Source Auto where Kelly Cars used to be they are parking their vehicles on the sidewalk and it's the vehicles that are for sale. I don't know if any of you have seen this but they are parking their cars on the sidewalk. Chief Starrett stated he did see where they are parking beside it but not on the sidewalk. Ms. Thomason stated yes, they are parking on the sidewalk especially on the weekend. They are blocking the sidewalk and I know the people use the sidewalk to go to the grocery store. Chief Starrett he would check it because this is the first time I have heard of this. Ms. Thomason asked if a citation was issued to A&R because I noticed they cleaned up everything except the trailer sitting there. Chief Starrett stated they are corporating with the process without a citation being written. Ms. Thomason asked if they are going to move the trailer that has been there. Chief Starrett stated yes, they will at some point. Ms. Thomason stated I've noticed it looks better than it did last time. Ms. Thomason stated down at Southern Dumpsters I have noticed the tractor trailer with the car hauler has started parking down there. Chief Starrett asked where this business is located. Ms. Thomason stated right down from the under-pass on Austell Road. Chief Starrett stated that is in the County not the City. Ms. Thomason stated to Chief Starrett she had spoken to him a couple of years ago about the Police Report and talking about the discrepancy in some of the numbers. I didn't know if you updated the system or what we need to do to take care of it. Because, when I went back and looked a couple of years and in 2012 it showed we had seventeen suicides in Austell. This year it shows we have had fifteen suicides so far. Chief Starrett stated I told you then we can't correct that because we have gone through the REMS system and tried to change it and we cannot. Ms. Thomason stated we have had forty-six hit and runs in Austell in 2013. We have had twenty-one this year. This is not even a correct Police Report. Can we not do something to make it correct? Chief Starrett stated we cannot correct the suicides because we have tried to correct it and we cannot.

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We notified the Council a couple of years ago about this problem. I can give you a written one separate from the one you have if you like. Ms. Thomason stated so that means, there are other discrepancies as well as the suicides. The other numbers do not seem to be correct. Chief Starrett asked what other discrepancies? Ms. Thomason asked Chief Starrett have we had twenty-one hit & runs this year? Did we have forty-six of them in 2013? That is an awfully high number. Ms. Thomason stated if someone wants to move into the City and they ask for a crime report or whatever is this something they would see. Chief Starrett stated they could go through the FBI and pull up the City's background cases one by one. Ms. Thomason stated she would hate for anyone to see how many suicides we have had in one small town and something not correct on it. Ms. Thomason stated this is all she had to speak about.

10. FIRE DEPARTMENT

**RANDY GREEN, CHAIRPERSON
Pat Maxwell. Fire Chief**

A. Fire Report

11. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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

A. No Report

Ms. Thomason stated to Mr. Bowens she had spoken to him a couple of times about the lights downtown that we put in. You stated that Georgia Power has to change the bulbs. Do you report to them or ask them on a monthly basis or how do you get those changed out. There are at least ten of them that are out right now. Mr. Bowens stated he just recently rode that area and there is an inquiry about the area near the station. Those lights were around Anti-Mart and those lights have shortened out and those lights are scheduled to be changed out very shortly. We didn't see the need to try and invest in the acorn lights there. We are working on the other ones and we submit requests to Georgia Power Company on a weekly basis. We have no control on them when they will come out. We have gone out on numerous occasions and told them the lights were not working. Sometimes you might see green ribbons around those lights and that is for their notification along with the light poles and they are numbered.

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What we have done in the past because Georgia Power wants us to number the lights and we have just finished an Audit on the light fixtures and the street lights that are in the City of Austell and sent to Georgia Power Company. We do have those numbers and we can coordinate with them and send them those numbers but there again it doesn't tell us when they will come out. My problem is we are paying for it monthly and we are still paying for lights that do not work. We have actually talked to John Seals there and several other people at Georgia Power and they have promised they will try and do better for us. Ms. Thomason asked why the City has Georgia Power doing it instead of our employees. Mr. Bowens stated we do not want that. It is too much maintenance for our employees and too costly. You have to have a certified electrician working on those lights. The controls in those lights are very costly. Georgia Power has a multitude of them. In our last conversation with Georgia Power and the Mayor just signed the authorization for Georgia Power to change all the street lights over to LED lights. This will help them as far as energy cost and provide much better lighting for the City of Austell. So, all the street lights that you see currently right now and instead of the old 100, 200, or 400 watt halogen lights will be changed to LED. Ms. Thomason stated this will be good. In doing so, once the contract with LCI is done and the poles down at Backstreet Station and the old acorn lights will come down and the poles they will be consistently the same throughout the City and will be like the lights along the bridge coming around and that will continue on to Veterans Memorial Highway.

**12. PARKS DEPARTMENT
SCOTT THOMAS, CHAIRPERSON
Jim Graham, Director**

- A. Virginia Reagan Memorial Bench at Mayor's Park
Mr. Thomas stated the Parks Committee recommends approval to have a bench engraved at the Mayors Memorial Park honoring Virginia Reagan.

Proposed wording for the memorial bench is as follows:

In Loving Memory Of
Virginia A. Reagan
A Council Member who faithfully served
the residents of Austell from 1995 – 2015.

The estimated cost of the bench and engraving will be \$1000.00. The cost of the bench and engraving will be paid for using money collected from donations.

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Mr. Thomas moved to follow the recommendation of the Parks Committee to approve the Virginia Reagan Memorial Bench. Seconded by Mr. Clemons. Motion passed (5-0).

**13. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
OLLIE CLEMONS, CHAIRPERSON
Jim Graham, Director**

- A. No Report

14. ATTORNEY, DUPREE & KIMBROUGH

- A. No Report

15. MAYOR'S REPORT

- A. CMA MEETING NO MEETING SCHEDULED
TIME:
LOCATION:

- B. A.A.C.I.C. Request
Mayor Jerkins stated to the Council that they had their lists. Mayor Jerkins asked if the Council had any questions on the list.

Ms. Thomason stated she had some questions. Ms. Thomason asked what the Community Group – Churches & Schools is who will receive \$25,000. This has never been on the list before. Mayor Jerkins stated it is a group of preachers and churches and the schools who have come together for a little over a year to get involved and help the community. Even the Vocational School attended the last meeting and I have been meeting with as well. They are trying to pull all six schools together to work together. Several churches are involved and one being Orange Hill who is involved in it and this has been going on for a year now. One thing they are trying to do is to get all the children together and make sure they stay in school. Of what direction they will carry the children and instead of falling out of school try and help each child on the path to success. All of these children will not be able to go to college. So, they are trying to find out in the early stages of these children just what they can accomplish.

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For example, to be an electrician, plumber, or a mechanic and try to get them motivated into some kind of career instead of quitting school at sixteen. This is what the money is allocated for. I am very much impressed with they are doing and it is a good group of Preachers coming together to help the community.

Ms. Thomason asked and why are we giving Austell First Baptist Church \$2,500.00? Mayor Jerkins stated two ladies came to see me and stated they didn't have any funds for the 125th Anniversary. Ms. Thomason asked is it for a celebration. Mayor Jerkins stated he didn't know exactly what they were going to do with it other than plan for the 125th Anniversary.

Ms. Thomason stated for those of you that don't know what A.A.C.I.C. stands for it is the Austell Area Community Improvement Commission. Several people have asked about this. This is money that came from the railroad that the Mayor has worked out with the railroad when they put the transfer station over here. He was instrumental in getting us that money and the money we are spending is the interest off of that money. So every year at this time of year we have a list of schools and churches, Veterans Memorial and it pays for the employees Christmas bonus. It is used for a lot of good things. Several of you have asked me why are we doing this and am I going to vote for it. Yes, I am going to vote it because part of the money is going to be well used. Part of it I do not agree with but because it is all together I will vote for it. Mayor Jerkins asked if anyone had any questions.

Chief Starrett asked Ms. Thomason to please go back and look at the Police Reports. Chief Starrett told Ms. Thomason she reading it incorrectly. Chief Starrett explained to Ms. Thomason on the left side is the Incident Type and on the right side is the number of the Incidents. Mr. Kimbrough stated to Chief Starrett we need to vote on the A.A.C.I.C. Request.

Mr. Green moved to follow the recommendation to approve the A.A.C.I.C. Request. Seconded by Ms. Anderson. Motion passed (5-0).

Chief Starrett stated to Ms. Thomason if you look at the left hand column you will see the Code number and to the right you will see the Number of Incidents. Ms. Thomason stated she understood, but she was adding the numbers in the right hand column over the previous months and came up with the total she had.

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Mayor Jerkins asked if anyone else had anything to add. Ms. Anderson stated she would like to mention the CMA Christmas Holiday Dinner will be Tuesday, December 8, 2015 at 6:30 P.M. Hosted by Marietta. I want to let you know if anyone is interested on being on the nominating committee or being an Officer next year you are highly needed and we would love to hear from you.

Ms. Thomason stated she had one more thing before we adjourn. It has been an honor to serve the citizens of Austell for the last four years and that is the job of the Mayor and Council to serve the citizens of Austell. I have learned so much and I will tell you I have read all of the material given to me and I have tried to ask questions when I didn't understand. I have attended every meeting day or evening that I could, having a fulltime job. I have done my best to serve you. I have listened to your comments and feedback and I feel I have voted and voiced my opinion from whatever I heard. Several of you have asked why I am not a Chairman of a Committee and since I did voice my opinion and the way I felt that I would represent you that Committee was given to another person. I will continue to attend Council Meetings when I leave office and I will get come up and voice my concerns. I urge all of you to do the same. As a City we have to work together if we want to see improvements and have a thriving downtown and improve the values of our homes.

16. ADJOURN

*Ms. Thomason moved to follow the recommendation to adjourn the meeting.
Seconded Mr. Green. Motion passed (5-0).*