

**MINUTES OF  
BOARD OF CITY COMMISSIONERS WORKSHOP**

Tuesday, September 23, 2014  
W. Elmer George Municipal Hall  
100 South Hill Street  
9:00 A.M.

Those present: Chairperson Ryan McLemore Commissioners Joanne Todd, Doug Hollberg, Dick Morrow, Rodney McCord, City Manager, Kenny Smith.

Those absent: Commissioner, Cora Flowers, Cynthia Reid Ward.

Chairman Ryan McLemore called the workshop meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Citizens Engagement Specialist Alvin Huff opens up with the discussion of better communicating with the residents of Griffin. The idea he presents is a quarterly magazine to educate and keep the residents better informed with what is going on in the city. He has talked with several organizations that will collaborate with the publishing and expense of the magazine. The magazine will also be available online.

The magazine will not need extra funds, there is money in the budget for the publishing. The cost of the magazine will be split between the participating partners and the cities cost will be \$2500.00 per edition, or \$9000.00 per year. In addition, the designer will be hired out, as well as printing and mailing, and the cost is included.

Mr. Huff stated that the magazine will be mailed to residents with the regular mail. There will be designated areas that will have the magazines available for pick up for those who do not live in the city.

Commissioner Morrow expressed his concern on how many hours this will take and who will be working on this project. Mr. Huff advised it is a combined effort and he is responsible for the city portion containing city information, as well as the overall management of the project.

Commissioner Todd stated she has no problem with this project as long as we get partners. She inquired about a Downtown Calendar as part of the magazine. Mr. Huff said there definitely would be a calendar.

Commissioner Morrow expressed additional concern regarding partners not having their information submitted on time for the publication. Mr. Huff said that he would add fillers to their portion of the magazine if necessary. In addition, if the partner does not get the information delivered in a timely manner they still owe money but forfeit their spot in the magazine.

City Manager, Kenny Smith stated that he thinks it's a great project and as long as the partners agree and hold their end of the deal. However, we cannot absorb the cost by ourselves. He has discussed the workload with Mr. Huff and he is aware on the time and work involved.

Mr. Huff stated the content is different from other local publication and felt the competition would not be an issue. The consensus of the Commission was to support the magazine.

Public Safety Director, Frank Strickland discusses the proposed Verizon Cell tower to be located on the Police Departments property at 868 West Poplar Street. He states that the tower pad will be an 80 x 80 space located inside the east end of the building inside the fence, and will be behind the coverage of other trees and well hidden. The monopole will be 80ft according to his contacts at Local Government Services even though the picture shows 140ft to 150ft. The actual attachment of the contract has not been received yet. Verizon said it is an 80ft pole. This lease has been in the works since October of last year. Upon signing the lease, Verizon will pay the negotiation cost of \$3000.00, the revenue share will be 20% for each tenant added and at the end of 5 years, there is a 10% inflationary increase every 5 years. In addition, the yearly revenue will be \$16,800.00, an increased amount from \$500.00 a month originally to \$1400.00 a month.

City Manager, Kenny Smith and Chief Financial Officer, Markus Schwab presented for discussion the proposed millage rate. The collection rate is based on 90% and 95%. Mr. Schwab suggests that we keep the rate the same from a cash flow perspective. A spreadsheet has been attached to the agenda with figures.

Commissioner Morrow stated that the citizens deserve a tax cut and he suggested 8.4%. He explained that in the worst-case scenario if we only get 90% collections, the \$62,000.00 deficit is still less than our contingency fund.

Commissioner McLemore questioned the definition of "collection rate". Do we base it on prior years collection? Mr. Schwab explained that we base it on prior year's collections actual activity, with that trending is how we forecast the budget. We base our budget at 95% of collections based on prior trending. Compared to the digest it runs a little bit less and runs roughly around 90%.

Commissioner Todd expressed her concern and said she would like to see it set lower than 8.4%. Commissioner Hollberg suggested that we have a referendum for increasing Homestead exemption. Commissioner Morrow stated that the State might object. Mr. Smith said they are in session now. He has spoken with legislative council and it is a constitutional issue. Overall, if the digest drops, then you have to raise taxes because the homestead exemption is set in stone with no flexibility under the legislative process.

In conclusion, the idea is to possibly reduce the property taxes or increase Homestead exemption for the residents and the financial increase for the city.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kenny Smith, Secretary

Accepted:

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Ryan McLemore, Chairman