

**CITY OF GRIFFIN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
ANNUAL GOALS WORKSHOP
GRIFFIN WELCOME CENTER
TUESDAY, February 10, 2015**

The Annual Goals Workshop of the City of Griffin Board of Commissioners was called to order by Chairperson Doug Hollberg at 8:30 a.m. Those present were Commissioners Cynthia Reid-Ward, Cora Lee Flowers, Ryan McLemore, Joanne Todd, Dick Morrow and Rodney McCord. Also in attendance were City Attorney Andrew Whalen, III; City Manager Kenny Smith; and Directors Bill Bosch, Electric; Miles Neville, Human Resources; Jack Poland, Information Technology; Steven Heaton, Griffin Police; Frank Strickland, Public Safety; Tommy Jones, Griffin Fire & Rescue; Brant Keller, Public Works & Utilities; Toussaint Kirk, Planning & Development; Kenwin Hayes, Economic Development; Kenda Woodard/Daa'ood Amin, Main Street; Phill Francis, Central Services; Robert Mohl, Airport Services; and Robert Dull, Housing Authority. Also in attendance were Spalding County Manager William Wilson; Teresa Watson to record minutes; and Ray Lightner, Griffin Daily News.

Griffin Fire & Rescue Chief Tommy Jones presented a Leadership Minute, reminding all to keep the main thing, the main thing, and to be consistently productive rather than of the one-hit wonder variety. He urged all to engage in a prevent defense -- play not to lose instead of just playing to win. Board members and Department Heads are positioned well and are some of the best he has seen in recent memory, but he noted that leaders are vulnerable when up on the hill. According to the slight edge principle, there is no traffic jam on the extra mile. He advocated that all leaders in attendance today encourage their groups and challenged them to continue to lead with respect, courage and integrity.

City Manager Smith reviewed 2015 Departmental Goals, copy attached, and asked for comments.

Commissioner Todd noted she was still getting complaints about the lengthy lines at the drive-through. Bill Bosch said they did put another person there about four months ago to alleviate the longer waits. Commissioner Todd was interested in having a spot somewhere in the Customer Service area where folks not needing a receipt could drop off their payment by check without having to wait, but it needs to be able to be credited the same day. Just leaving their checks would relieve a lot of the traffic. Much discussion followed, and Mr. Bosch stated they will work on this issue and figure out where to place such a receptacle. Commissioner Flowers concurred but said there was no need to get in line to get to the dedicated box; she felt it would be more prudent to place it away from the main flow of traffic.

Mr. Smith noted that Markus Schwab took a spill in the parking lot this morning. He was taken to the hospital by ambulance with a probable dislocated shoulder. He noted that he has the financials for the end of December and will have someone handle at tonight's meeting. Now, half-way through the fiscal year, things are pretty much on target. He noted that Mr. Schwab is worried about the upcoming \$2.6 million balloon note on One Griffin Center which is due in November 2016. The City had put that debt on the failed SPLOST; the County is 99% sure they will call for another SPLOST in November to take effect in April 2016 with first collections paid in May 2016, but you cannot just assume it will pass. He and Mr. Schwab are discussing how to plan for this balloon note in two years. The City can borrow from the MEAG Trust with a repayment schedule; this fund is scheduled to take care of debt that has been pushed to 2020 probably. The City is obligated to cover airport payments of about \$250,000 in 2016, 2017 and 2018, after which time the County will kick in half and begin to repay the payments made by the City for the first three years for the remainder of the bond. The Spalding County obligation begins in the fourth year. Dr. Keller in the Water Department has upcoming debt later that will approach \$20,000,000 to \$40,000,000 for critical water infrastructure, as well, so the City has some cash flow challenges in the next and subsequent fiscal years.

Next, Mr. Smith said Chairman Hollberg asked about homestead exemption which is currently \$4,000. An exemption of \$10,000 at 40% results in \$4,000. With an exemption of \$20,000.00, it would cost us \$422,000. With an exemption of \$40,000, it would cost the City about \$680,000. Commissioner Morrow said it was a wonderful idea but faced with financial mountain looming, he was not in favor of increasing the exemption. Commissioner Hollberg said he would ask for their blessing to go to home rule and work toward some way to increase this exemption. A constitutional amendment statewide may be necessary to give local home rule. Commissioner Flowers felt to implement home rule would be impractical, and Mr. Smith noted it would probably take multiple years to achieve. Commissioner Todd said the City did not need to expend a multitude of resources to fight a battle it won't win, considering staff time, lobbying time, etc. Commissioner McLemore saw no reason to delay at least trying for home rule. Timing may not be feasible to increase homestead exemption.

Commissioner Morrow felt the City Manager and County Manager could jointly work on homestead exemption. Commissioner Todd was not sure we have manpower to implement but perhaps we do. Mr. Smith stated it was a worthy cause and would probably take a minimum of three years. In our situation, a homestead exemption increase might be feasible, but the City's hands are tied at this point.

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Mr. Smith continued with a review of SPLOST projects on the failed referendum. He talked about debt and the Fire Department Headquarters. Mr. Smith felt City projects were solid, but voters took issue with some County projects. He was optimistic that the County would call for a SPLOST referendum this November, and he was hopeful the City and County could work toward a negotiated split.

County Manager Wilson noted his Board will have a workshop in March on SPLOST.

The City had \$7.7 million in total transportation projects, including sidewalks. Regarding historic City Hall, a local contractor has estimated he can put a roof on for an amount not to exceed \$65,000. Phill Francis has been talking to a contractor who has briefly inspected the roof twice already. Chairman Hollberg said the City really needs to stabilize the roof. Commissioner McLemore said he had been under the impression this roof cost would approach \$300,000. Mr. Francis said a year ago he obtained an estimate from a structural engineer and manufacturer of product for roof, and that estimate was \$420,000 for a combo single pitch and flat roof with soffit. This estimate was to replace all the aging gables and take it down to a flat roof and to maintain the historic look. In the meantime, there were some suggestions from the DDA for alternatives. Steve Morris, a local contractor, feels he can replace the aging gables and trusses and redeck the entire shingle roof with galvanized lip to channel water over the old copper for \$65,000. Mr. Francis affirmed a cost not to exceed \$65,000 was already in the budget. The part shingle/part copper roof would go to entirely shingle. He has no issues with the quality of Mr. Morris' work, but would certainly bid out the project. It is critical to get this roof repaired to ensure the roof and building are not further compromised. The City will still have to do a lead-based paint abatement at about \$231,000 and another \$141,000 for asbestos abatement. Some felt we should go ahead and take care of the roof and then put the remainder of building maintenance on the next SPLOST. Wilde Roofing has no interest in the roof repair. Commissioner McLemore said \$65,000 buys the City time to continue with restoration efforts and protects the property.

County Manager Wilson updated with actual 2014 expenditure data on 800 MHz system, but said the original concept was still the same. Commissioner Hollberg wanted to arrive at some compromise and get this issue resolved. Mr. Wilson said his Board wants both full boards (City and County) in attendance at the March meeting. Commissioner Todd said she was not inclined to meet if our positions haven't changed. Mr. Smith said he had offered before in a final agreement three tower sites, addressed the number of clicks, defined the radio users group and asked for any tower lease space to go back to offset expenses. The County didn't agree with any of that.

Mr. Wilson stated the users group has formed but are discussing other issues. The City suggesting to the County how to run its operation when providing this service to the City is inappropriate felt Mr. Wilson. He compared it to having the County tell the City how to operate its Water Department which provides water to County customers. Commissioner Morrow agreed this stalemate cannot go on forever, and he was ready to hash it out.

City Manager Smith disagreed with Mr. Wilson's water analogy and referenced the service delivery strategy. The County asked the City to partner in 800 MHz, so he wondered if the City were partner or customer? Commissioner Todd said the County ran SPLOST as county-wide project and cannot divorce the City citizens from the County. The City had no voice in where they put or rented a tower. If they are a partner, they should have equal input. The City might pay a percentage based on its use of the system said Mr. Smith. He is watching closely a lawsuit going on in northeast Georgia; if one substituted Spalding County for Habersham County and the City of Griffin for the City of Clarkesville, the situation is exactly the same. The City is not unique because it is a service delivery strategy issue.

Mr. Wilson said the County rented space on the tower on Williamson Road to Verizon and is using this revenue to offset operations of 800 MHz across the board, so everyone does benefit. Chairman Hollberg suggested that if the tower has additional revenue, the County reduce expenditures by that amount received in revenue. City Public Safety radio traffic can go through any of the five towers. Some wondered what percentage of clicks is actual City radio traffic.

Mr. Smith contended Public Safety should be excluded as part of the 911 infrastructure. He argued that Public Safety should not be billed again for 911 infrastructure operations. Mr. Wilson said he and Mr. Smith disagree entirely. This is only 800 MHz and has nothing to do with 911. He noted that 911 is a totally separate fund and utilizes 800 MHz to dispatch only. Based on the latest data to the County, percentages are 33% city, 46% county, and the remainder for other, such as EMS. The cost is \$136,000 for FY 2014; \$126,000 for 2013, \$126,000 for 2012 and \$78,000 in 2011.

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Commissioner Morrow said in a worst case scenario the City could pay \$136,000 which might not be a bad place to start. He questioned the removal of City police/fire, as these are city services only.

Mr. Smith said his contention, and other cities in similar circumstances, is that you cannot separate 800 MHz from 911; without it, you would not have an operational 911 system. Through the Service Delivery Strategy, the County has agreed that is a County function. Spalding County took 911 as a countywide function. Mr. Wilson responded the County general fund does subsidize its 911 service at about \$200,000. At \$136,000, this would be less than \$12,000 per month.

Commissioner McLemore said double taxation argument was one argument, and the second argument involves police service. What should technically work is that the Sheriff's Office should cover all calls, with City Police supplementing, but it doesn't work that way. He relayed he can see both arguments and wouldn't mind utilizing an outside mediator. He thought the City has been generous and it is now getting thrown back. Commissioner McLemore doesn't want to go to court, but felt the City would win in that scenarios as it appears to him to be double taxation. Mr. Smith said Upson County is now in court on this double taxation issue. The Service Delivery Strategy will be up for discussion in October 2017. Commissioner Morrow said he was not convinced we were not using it and would be willing to look at it. Part of the cost of Police and Fire using 911, could lend itself to the argument that it costs to run our systems. They are not paying for communicators' operational costs (staff, facilities, etc.) but rather only wanting to pay for 800 MhZ infrastructure.

Mr. Wilson said he could transfer 911 calls to the City's Fire and Police today if that is what the City wanted. Mr. Smith contended that would not be legal because of the Service Delivery Strategy.

Commissioner McLemore said if the County were to get upset with the City over this issue as suggested, how would we as a city explain to our residents that they have no service even though they are paying for it. Paying County property taxes to the general fund is a basic argument. He was willing to compromise but has questions. He felt the City would win that lawsuit, but he doesn't want to get to that situation. Chairman Hollberg said they may be between the original offer and the \$136,000 figure. Mr. Smith urged everyone to keep in mind that the City is picking up the debt payments for the new airport for the first three years, and the City cannot pay for everything.

Jack Poland, Chief Technology Officer for the City, thanked everyone for their support and noted that good things occurred this year. First, on the proposed fiber route for 911, they did not get started but are working on an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) for the County to upgrade CAD in order to make fiber work. Their CAD has not been upgraded for some time. They have an interest in putting fiber in at 911 and utilizing a stand up system at the City's One Griffin Center. He presented a slide presentation which is attached to and becomes a part of these minutes. Currently they cannot utilize a full flow of data on CAD and need to upgrade in order to be compatible. A new requirement that the Fire Department use DMS to give them the ability to share from CAD is another good reason to upgrade. Therefore, the proposed fiber route to 911 is waiting for this IGA and CAD upgrade from the County. The cost of fiber is the City's cost but the County must upgrade on their nickel; the latest cost estimate is around \$185,000 for an upgrade to CAD. The upgrades will provide much better functionality and technology and reduce costs for the County because servers, etc. already run on OSSI platform as with the Police Department. Putting CAD over in part of that cloud would save the purchase of additional servers and equipment, as well as manpower costs. It would be their CAD but the City would maintain. Their last CAD last upgrade was 2004. Police cars are not getting full data. Computer-aided dispatch is the data side that populates the Police cars. The City has unlimited data. Another good news story is that now the Police Department uses unlimited data cards which are more robust because they can get a full system with full CAD. MDTs last life cycle was last year and they got wireless cards in July. Information flow from ONESolution CAD to Griffin mobiles allows Griffin Police Department to realize roughly 60% of functionality that already exists in MDT but is not currently utilized due to ONESolution CAD not being in place. There could exist increased efficiencies on both the CAD side and the Griffin mobile side for every call that is dispatched. 800 MHz only can get license lookup and tag lookup but cannot handle other data. The County's system was behind the times before it was even up and running. This would also allow the ability for Spalding County to begin their own fiber network.

Mr. Wilson said the system was Open Sky and, considering the City used air cards, there has never been any cost allocation in 800 MHz calculations for this at all. They try to work with the City.

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Mr. Poland invited all to the server room to see the new Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS). This runs in the server room and will allow all functions, including electric sys ops, to stay up in outages. The old system provided only about 40 minutes and was in poor condition. Everything moved over and was tested last Wednesday. There have been great strides made to give the City full capability to stay up in outages which provides much needed recovery time. It basically acts as a 200 amp service with batteries. Bill Bosch said it looks nonimpressive but major corporations like GE can't even provide this option. Mr. Poland thanked everyone for their support; we are where any IT should be.

Commissioner Hollberg said questions from local businesses voiced concern about competition in the information technology arena. Mr. Poland said he welcomed discussions with any businesses. The City has never gone out and solicited business away from anyone or taken away from any business. We are government and, if approached by the County, this is mere talk between two governments – The City's IT Department is not in business to take away competition. Having said that, he has never had any local vendors visit with him, but he would welcome that dialogue.

Frank Strickland, Director of Public Safety, said he was trying to maintain a tight schedule and would be brief. He talked about the Code Enforcement task force in the Spring Hill area and the second area. Identifying these two neighborhoods, and implementing crime suppression with Police, Building Inspections and Code Enforcement, will reduce blighted properties by 5% each area, or ten houses in both areas for a total of 20 substandard properties targeted for demolition. This will reduce crime and revitalize these two neighborhoods. They have increased Code Enforcement by 25%. The task force last year issued 3500-3600 warning citations, but that has increased to about 8946 citations to get folks and properties into compliance after adding four people. Their efforts ran from March to October and made a significant difference in the Spring Hill area. Part of the overall plan is to bring back the Meriwether Homes area. Some residents have been displaced, and he was not sure where they will go. As for Spruce's Barbecue, the IRS had the property the last he inquired for taxes owed, but that may have changed. He would like to make Meriwether Street a three-lane corridor all the way into town which would solve a great many problems but that would take a lot of money. Mr. Whalen noted this was no longer a GDOT corridor.

Chief Strickland noted this was a good year in the Fire Department, the Police Department and Code Enforcement. He thanked Mr. Wilson for having the County partner with them. They are using the firing range on a regular basis. They began building the tire house at the Shoal Creek Landfill range and will have Open House on completion. They will be back in front of ISO in April for mandated requirements to keep Class 2. The City is handling the the Fire Department facility renovations on its own, with \$95,000 from the old fire bond. Fire Department personnel have done all the work, and there will be an Open House on completion, as well, probably in the next couple of months.

Police Chief Steve Heaton wanted to cover one of the biggest concerns: the rate of crime. He referenced his slide presentation, which is attached to and becomes a part of these official minutes. Griffin experienced a 15.77% decrease in Part 1 crimes from 2013 to 2014. The statistics reflect a good year last year but he did not want to rest on our laurels. The City can improve on stats from last year. We experienced decreases in the numbers of rape, robbery, burglary and larceny, but an increase in three areas: murder, aggravated assaults and theft of motor vehicles. They are collaborating with the Sheriff's Office to take care of both the County and City, and he has met with the District Attorney (DA) to work on gang enhancement statutes. Staff changes have been made at the DA that have been helpful. He touches base periodically with DA Scott Ballard and they often work on coordinating operations. Commissioner Morrow said he hears good things from the SO side. Chief Heaton said personnel changes have helped and our differences don't define how we partner. Narcotics and organized crime are retasking to work more on gang issues this year (mo's, pictures, patrols, documents, vehicles, etc. and other shared information). They are trying to make it really uncomfortable to be associated with gangs. Reduced crime stats and efforts to make more the PD more proactive are proving beneficial.

Commissioner McCord asked the Chief to elaborate on the gang enhancement statutes. If a person thought to be part of a gang commits a crime that may be a misdemeanor, he wondered if the City would actively try to make that a felony. If someone in a bar fight perpetuates the same misdemeanor as that person suspected of gang activity, is the City going to try to treat both the same? Chief Heaton

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said part of being in a gang is the realization that it is an organization with members who go out and terrorize people. A beat-in is where they beat someone almost to death, and that happens. If such a person is charged with battery they could get probation, but the objective of gang enhancement statutes is to deliver more stringent sentences that will deter this type behavior. If we know someone is connected to organized crime, then yes we will try to use RICO statutes on some of our drug dealers. Along that same logic, if a perpetrator is a known gang member, then these enhancement statutes serve to put more teeth into curbing gang activity.

Commissioner McCord noted that traditionally when we think of gangs, we do so in the context of the African American community, so it won't go over well if we as a City say we are going to actively pursue via enhancement statutes any black kid out here selling drugs or whatever who may have gang titles or affiliations when others across town are doing the same but don't wear the same type of clothing or conform to the gang member stereotype. If both parties do the same thing regardless of who they are, should they not be prosecuted in the same manner? He was not comfortable hearing someone say they are going to actively try to destroy the life of a kid they perceive as being involved with gang activities when others do the same thing.

Chief Heaton maintained the Police Department is not ruining anyone's life; they do that themselves. Commissioner McCord said he was not advocating reducing or eliminating punishment for criminals; he was just looking for consistency in the application. Being a graduate of the area as a young black man, he's seen it all in a society where this type behavior is rampant. He was merely concerned about treating people who do the same thing differently. His comment was not meant as an indictment on the Police Department that there is inconsistency. He just advocated equal treatment.

Chief Heaton said this was a legitimate concern. The City has white and Hispanic members of gangs, as well, and any who are involved in misdemeanors will be treated equally with RICO and gang related statutes. While he does agree there may be concentrations in black communities or Hispanic or white, he noted the PD simply goes where the problems are. Treatment is race neutral and his personnel can continue to charge as before the enhancements, but that has proven to not be effective. Enhancement statutes are merely more tools in the tool box to put people away. Many people in the communities that were mentioned are being victimized themselves. Commissioner McCord affirmed he won't stand for anyone breaking the law, but he simply wants consistency.

Arrests are based on crimes these people commit; enhanced sentences work in much the same way as RICO does. There is a list of crimes that, if committed by gang members, can be enhanced but it is a long list with a broad range of crimes. It doesn't apply to traffic violations or other lesser crimes generally. Additionally, with the way these statutes are written, one must prove gang involvement; one cannot just think it to be true. Beyond that, even if the perpetrator is known to be gang affiliated, they must prove that the actual crime is linked to gang activity. Perpetrators could be gang members but not of the crime were not directly related to gang activity, enhanced statutes could not be utilized.

Mr. Smith emphasized the City has got to get a grip on shooting issues. There was another shooting just last night. He noted that Commissioner McLemore just had to leave briefly as School Superintendent Curtis Jones is announcing at 10:30 that he is leaving for a position with the Macon-Bibb County System. Commissioner McLemore briefly left the workshop.

Chief Heaton referenced statistics cited in the five year comparison and further discussed how to tighten up and create a safer situation for residents. The PD Clearance Rate compares very favorably to national rates for Part 1 crimes which are identified and tracked by the FBI. The City has cleared all murders; forcible rapes at 52.6%; aggravated assaults at 64.7% and other areas exceeded in clearance rates as well. These eight types of crimes are deemed most serious by the FBI. He agreed with Director Strickland when he talked about working with Planning/Zoning, Code Enforcement and Police to take multidisciplinary approach. We will attack substandard housing and 20 houses are included in a group to be addressed. There is a strong correlation between crime and blighted areas, and they are taking two areas this year as a goal. Planning and Development has projected 50 overall homes to be demolished, but these 20 are in the two identified areas as needing concentration from a crime standpoint. They have identified gang areas, and he noted that colors help with affiliation of gangs. Our gangs are more local and some are even a hybrid of local and the metro area. There are about 400 gang members locally; they adopt rules, philosophies, and history. Middle school age children are the youngest he has seen involved. He used an overlay of target areas with gang areas to tell a more complete story. He referenced that 85% of the identified areas have been visited more

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than two times. There is a strong statistical rationale for why the department identified these two areas. They will saturate and concentrate patrols here. They will develop and implement a Power Squad (crime suppression unit) consisting of five officers who will work in designated areas to increase police presence to address crimes in these areas. Officers must spend time on those already victimized and patrols do active servicing of crimes being reported. Calls could be burglaries, drugs, traffic or violent crimes. Sometime officers are uniformed and sometime plain clothes. He is not interested in having two drug units and trying to keep them separated. He will assign two investigators to assist other officers/detectives with gang-related cases to determine if gang enhancement statutes can be used in specific cases, and they will assign an investigator as a liaison with the FBI. The department will remain focused and look at saturating these areas. They will work with Code Enforcement and Planning/Development since they have had success over this last year in doing so. Officers will be doing citations much as Code Enforcement does. The recent event at Fairmont recently had about 30 in attendance and was a good experience. Coffee with a Cop and Cocoa with a Cop are efforts at trying to get into the community, also. His department will work with community and business leaders to improve police and community relations. He has met with local pastors and will continue to do so to build a coalition to increase relationships, all of which help to solve underlying problems with better communication and collaboration.

The continuing issues of recruitment and retention remain problematic. There is a small pool of qualified applicants and the process is good, but selection is extremely important. Experienced officers continue to leave for better pay. Some stay in law enforcement and others turn to the private sector. He was appreciative of the salary study last year. Other agencies pay an average of \$5268 more per year for entry level than the City of Griffin. The Chief used agencies we are losing employees to in order to validate his own survey of surrounding jurisdictions. In one case a sister city that mirrors us as far as demographics has starting pay at \$10,000 more. The department has had a couple of retirements along with four people on extended medical leave for further reductions in workforce. Signing bonuses for experienced officers might help, noted Chief Heaton, and since the previous salary study, he was allowed to raise starting pay by 5%, but starting at \$32,000 is still a problem. He is hiring a twenty-year old for the first time in his career because the labor pool is small.

Additionally, Chief Heaton responded to Commissioner Flowers that he just began this past year the practice of having employees sign a two-year commitment if they are sent for training in an effort to recoup training costs should they leave. However, if the employee leaves for private sector rather than law enforcement, there is no effort to recoup. Some officers actually enter employment with the mindset to leave after training for greater pay. To further complicate this issue, to pursue an officer leaving before filling his two-year commitment requires an investment of money, resources and time.

Mr. Smith agreed, saying that although we are discussing retention in the context of the Police Department, this is truly a citywide issue. It is an every-increasing problem for electric with linemen, drivers, CDL drivers, water plant operators, public works employees, central services and others. Part of the issue is attributed to our being a unique geographical location to the metro area. One can drive 20 more minutes to Clayton County and make thousands more in salary and benefits. If one is willing to commute to Gwinnett, he or she can make even \$20,000 more. We are losing to Fayette County, Clayton County, LaGrange, Tyrone, McDonough and others. LaGrange is close in demographics but pays \$10,000 more in starting pay than Griffin. When he did the study, Chief Heaton said there was only one opening in LaGrange so retention doesn't appear to be an issue.

Planning & Development Director Toussaint Kirk addressed the group next. The Griffin Housing Council is being reenergized and they have identified a couple of goals for this year, i.e. a long-range plan for community housing and demolishing 50 homes per year if possible. Housing demolitions slowed some in October but is picking back up. About 100 were done last calendar year for land bank, housing authority, private, etc. He referenced the maps utilized by Police Chief Heaton. The Doc Holliday park between 8th, 9th and Tinsley could enhance this area said Chairman Hollberg. Fifty homes were identified in the upper area and 20 in the below area for demolition. The Meriwether District is to be renamed hopefully for a more positive connotation. The Land Bank is on board with a turnaround time of 2-3 weeks from identification to demolition. The work in 2012 by the Housing Authority is being used as a model for where we want to go. They are continuing to work on blighted areas on Meriwether. Much discussion followed. Mr. Kirk said partnering with Code Enforcement to work on absentee landlords, blight tax issues, new neighborhoods, inadequate

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housing stock, high rates of rental housing, and the Meriwether Project has been critical. At the end of the day, they address concerns on several levels.

Robert Dull, Housing Authority Executive Director, detailed the housing Master Plan. This area's pressing problems include substandard housing, inability to obtain grants, aging structures and infrastructure, labor force, education, high ratio of renters to homeowners, and an overall poor perception. Consultants identified Griffin's greatest asset as City Park and the Golf Course area. They plan to target pockets of substandard housing, basically shotgun shanties, from English over to Pimento. When driving down Meriwether Street, Pimento is the natural gateway to the park. They bought the house on the corner and cleared it, but not mowed it. Directional signage to the park and golf course is needed. It makes sense to have another gateway rather than just the point behind the hospital. The consultant looked at this as an ideal elderly community with golf cart paths, medical center, doctors and close proximity to downtown. In any other downtown, this would be prime real estate. Moving Public Works away from the area might also help revitalize it. They have contacted homeowners who are starting to realize the value. He encouraged a look beyond the footprint of public housing. If not homeownership, perhaps a retirement village could be viable. They could close off the area and make a gated retirement community. The shacks on Booker have been torn down. The Authority owns about 33-34 lots around town; they had no intent to be a land bank but perhaps these lots could be utilized as pocket parks or redeveloped infill housing. Design standards will help with development, and HUD is opening up a few other grant opportunities. The future is definitely in the concept of partnering. We have operated in somewhat of an isolated environment, but real dollars only come with investors partnering. This team will focus on presenting a positive marketing plan/image, obtaining grants, addressing infrastructure that is aging, involving local businesses and leaders, improving housing via architectural design, and new development ideals.

The City is being very generous and is trying to help sell the case to HUD and DCA. Mixed uses will provide diverse communities with a variety of housing and employment options, social and recreational opportunities, and a variety of amenities. Community enhancement will include visually appealing characteristics, pedestrian/bike travel pathways, and a preservation of historic and existing identities on which to build. A new urban design will have family townhomes toward the front of the street with parking in the rear. Cameras will be strategically located. A Senior Courtyard midrise housing may have to go to a village type setting. Offsite housing will have no visible cars but green areas, and it will be beautiful. Single family infill housing provides a choice of affordable home ownership for very-low, low and moderate income residents. Streetscapes are required for housing, and DCA will not fund any projects with vinyl siding; they must have a minimum brick component. Homes will be 1400 sf to 1100 sf, the same as Meriwether Homes. They will be electric with washer/dryer included. Certain standards will be met and they will not have that mobile home appearance like many Habitat dwellings have. The timeline for Meriwether is November 2015. They should be up and occupied by December. The Phase II application is a competitive process and will know in December if we can start Phase II construction in the next three years.

Daa'ood Amin, Main Street Program Chair, addressed the group on behalf of Kenda Woodard, Main Street Program Manager on the hotel-motel tax. Slides were taken from a Department of Community Affairs presentation. Main Street is interested in raising this tax to a maximum of 8%; it is currently at 7% for City and 3% for County. This tax varies across the state from 3% to 8% with guidelines, and the tax authorizations has a unique set of expenditure requirements for both restricted and unrestricted portions. Restricted portions of the tax revenue must be used for promoting, attracting, stimulating, and development designed to attract or advertise trade shows, conventions and tourism, including possible capital costs and operating expenses. He urged the City to make it 8%, and hoped for the same with Spalding County. As noted with housing, public/private partnerships are good and beneficial. Chairman Rita Johnson with the County is open to exploring more unrestricted funds at that level. Just under 62% of restricted funds may be used for tourism, public facilities, etc. Restricted funds are for things you want to do anyway. If the two boards deem to go forward, they can proceed with drafting of legislation and provide to City and County attorneys.

Commissioner Morrow did not desire to move up if the County does not move up as it would create an unlevel playing field. He hopes to see both go to 8%.

Bill Bosch, Griffin Power Director, provided an overview of the Thomas Property project, scheduled to complete next month. Estimated at \$2.645 million, it will most likely complete at around \$2.6 million. Some discussion followed about how to utilize the front area for a rose garden. They may

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have to move the planned park area to a location in front of Solid Waste with grading and landscaping. There will be a budget amendment at the next meeting to finalize funding.

With regard to Sys Ops, OMS, customer interaction ... the new Sys Ops Center is complete. Outage management will be completed in six months, including a customer interaction site that can be viewed on our city website. IVR will also be complete and will allow approximately 40 calls to be serviced through automation. When converting CAD, just to make sure all connections are accomplished on CAD maps has been a year-long project. When outages come, color codes and circles will identify; dedicated industrial feeder circuits will be state of the art and truly second to none. This is a self-healing network. They have approached the new industrial tenant (the vinegar plant) but that new account probably will be with another provider because of territorial issues. That lot and two other lots are technically another provider's, but everything else will be competition.

Line loss has been reduced from 6% to 4% for a savings in electricity. Proactive customer initiatives include water leak indication letters, high energy audits, one-on-one and other meetings with customers on several levels, bill date options, cradle-to-grave service (holding employees accountable with better tracking as they are assigned to a customer service for response and follow-up), and paperless service orders. They utilize a good mix of coal, gas, hydro, and nuclear. In the near future there may be decisions on SEPA and shuttering of the Wansley coal plant. Wansley coal debt will be paid within five years. We are looking at Vogtle 3 and 4 contract future commitments.

Challenges include EPA and unfunded mandates, solar legislation which has the potential of doubling energy bills, reducing Kwh usage, general fuel costs, shuttering of coal assets, absorbing much of the increases over the past few years, employee retention (Georgia Power put out call at \$7.00 per hour increase to start recently), and 2G communication on AMI with a complete update in near future. The possibility of losing critical positions in electric with five that can retire in near future is looming. It is difficult to find in this generation folks who might want to climb utility poles in inclement weather for the City's starting pay. We invest 3-1/2 years in training and once trained, they can go anywhere in the world, so the City is somewhat of a staging area. Finally, he talked about AMI, the solution to the turndown of 2G communication.

Brant Keller, Public Works and Utilities Director, detailed stressors on the system, as well as strengths. Many EPA regulations and EPD will visit next year at the Cabin Creek WWTP. Another stressor is employee retention. Employees can go to surrounding areas for thousands more. Clayton County employee benefits are not so much greater but greater pay is a real attraction. He has been without a WWTP Superintendent for 13 months now. The water loss program, 237/238 intersection signals, nailing down right-of-way (ROW) issues and some construction on this project in a decent window are on the horizon for the 3rd quarter of this year. The SPLOST project metrics of ROW are being worked on, and they may start pushing dirt after this row acquisition in perhaps six months. He reviewed slides which are attached to and become a part of these official minutes. They are looking at many pieces but projects on top of other projects are problematic. We are growing our system to serve more customers but our population is staying the same. For 27 years the system sat in limbo by his previous predecessor, and aging equipment and infrastructure become real problems. Potato Creek expenses are increasing because of copper. Consultants are responding to info the City gets from EPD, who mandates this treatment. These hefty increases do not include Shoal Creek or Cabin Creek capacity, but are merely responses to these EPD mandates. He has paid consent assessments twice already and does not want to have to pay violations on copper. The Flint River Pump Station is working in the background. More transmission lines must be built and working within a regulatory environment, and these mandates cost. Cost analysis for volume and trend lines reflect that we are moving in the right direction and closing the gap on debt. He identified \$250,000 to help close this gap. One high service pump costs \$1 million. He detailed Still Branch withdrawal permit conditions and statistics. If Still Branch goes down, we would have no water and lose the permit as well. They are trying to do without rate increases except for MCI. Commissioner Morrow stated we can't be all water, to all people and all things. Perhaps it's acceptable for some to get water somewhere else.

The group adjourned for lunch and resumed shortly after. Dr. Keller concluded by addressing a review of progress to date with regard to billing and customer service and system intervention, as well as non-revenue water loss, broken pipe policy, leak history and the system leak detection plan, the Pinetree Hill sewer project and other costs and connections.

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Phill Francis, Director of Central Services, provided an overview of solid waste, facilities maintenance, commercial waste, yard waste, motor pool and the transfer station/recycling center. Dependable Waste is doing a good job with yard debris. However, multi-family complexes and apartments are taxing the system. Special handling situations are labor intensive. Some ideas were explored, such as possible annual fees for apartment complexes who have large numbers of transient population. One option could be a fee for commercial/business services perhaps four times per year. Commissioner Morrow asked if business owners could be treated as residential customers, and some discussion followed. Central Services has been losing customers, and that trend is continuing. Mr. Francis also noted that his department currently services over 690 “back door” customers (elderly, mobility-impaired, disabled, etc.) and that number is increasing, and these are very labor intensive.

Chairman Hollberg called for a commission discussion of 2015 Goals.

Commissioner Morrow noted there are six major economic generators in most places. Agriculture and forestry are not big opportunities within the City. Manufacturing is second. Economic development is another. Higher education as an economic generator is viable here with Southern Crescent Technical College and the University of Georgia Griffin Campus. Government of course is visible here but a military base is not in our economic landscape. Medical connections can be improved but appear to be good. He felt Griffin, unlike other areas like Madison and Savannah, fails at tourism which is a multi-billion dollar industry. We have assets not yet exploited, such as Oak Hill Cemetery, additional Doc Holliday events, the KIA plaque program for downtown, Walking Dead tours, and perhaps a walk of stars that could be a sidewalk tour of movie sites like Driving Miss Daisy. We have had about four Tuskegee airmen from Griffin, with one still alive, and we have had a successful historic tour of homes. The Historical Society creates markers by homes and the City could set up a tour; there is much Civil War and Civil Rights history here. There are 9 or 10 really interesting historical sites, The City needs to step up and have someone drive this train for tours and develop tourism to a much greater degree because we miss a lot of dollars.

Commissioner Todd noted there was perhaps more of a focus years ago with Carolyn Byrd who had dedicated team of folks pursuing these type opportunities. This March may possibly be the last race at Atlanta Motor Speedway, and there will probably be no fair there next year either. Doc Holliday Festival was great last year, and an amphitheater could have already been done at City Park. We need someone to pursue and concentrate on such tourism models, even though we are doing some good.

Commissioner Flowers said she had no issues other than normal type items and no complaints.

Commissioner Reid-Ward wanted to reiterate that she would like to see police officers reporting that some houses need their doors boarded up as they patrol. Solid Waste workers or anyone in City could do this, as well. Last week she called Public Works to ask if covers, as in scrap iron, could be handled. Many houses like last week got tagged as substandard, but by the next day the majority of tags had been torn off. To check back after tagging a home to make sure this does not happen might be a good idea. She was not sure of the relationship between the Sheriff’s Office (SO) and Police Department, especially regarding gang activity, but there is a problem where City meets the County, such as North Hill in the flats. She was concerned over how invested the SO is for follow-up. Folks on the City side of some areas watch what goes on over on the County side, and she wondered if there Griffin PD could possibly cover these areas. The Chief responded they could serve in the County jurisdictions only if deputized. They already deputize narcotics agents to go into the County, but even then County must go in with them.

Mr. Smith noted that after the roundabout and bridge issue are addressed through this transportation project, perhaps the City can explore annexing that side of the road into the City and be able to take care of both sides of the road. They cannot do that now, but after splitting the cost with Spalding County on the intersection improvements, that may be an option. There are a great many issues in the flats that complicates things. Chief Heaton works with the SO on road checks and gang units so they do work together on some things. The County’s problems become the City’s and vice versa. Both agencies spend a lot of time in the flats. Some gang members are as young as 8 or 9 with no rules to follow. Another mitigating factor is that at-risk children or young gang affiliates are children born to addicts with no moral compass and many have mental issues, too, noted Commissioner Reid-Ward.

Commissioner Todd said looking at the homeless issue downtown from Christian perspective was becoming more difficult. Some people are getting accosted downtown by homeless transients and ministries that are downtown to help are beginning to exacerbate the problem even though they are

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well intentioned. If we are going to get serious about tourism, we need to get handle on this issue downtown. Another concern of hers is visitors' perception of empty buildings. Reports on these problems are good, but it seems that nothing much changes. The City might look at putting something in empty storefront windows even if buildings are vacant to give it a more inhabited appearance. As for paving, she knew money is short but would like to see some resurfacing and not patching. She inquired about the status of Spruce's Barbecue building on Meriwether Street. She is very pleased about the new airport and hopes to see it in her lifetime. Big box retail and food chain stores are good, but we also need small businesses to thrive. When the LCI study was done 10 years ago, Hill and Solomon was to be the entertainment/food industry of the whole City. Now look at what is allowed in that corridor. Lots of municipalities are putting a halt to storefront churches because of these type problems. She echoed Chief Tommy Jones' sentiments that this Board and department heads are excellent and accomplishing great things; she wanted to see that continue.

Commissioner McCord agreed and thought we could always do better. Yes some things are good and sometimes he sounds anti-police, but he felt the Police Chief's efforts are good and a step in the right direction. As the parent of two young boys, he was very concerned about gangs even in subdivisions in northern Spalding County. He wondered what the Board can do, as policy makers, to ensure safety growing up in a community with such ills. We can never be part of the problem but beyond that we can be more involved with activities, such as going to Fairmount Park recently and through participation in social media. In this manner we can become more transparent and better educate the people around us. We are becoming more approachable and staff is becoming more competent to address issues. But we need to continue education efforts. This Board backed the City Manager for the Citizen Engagement Specialist position which helped in this particular area.

Commissioner Todd agreed and noted that in Aiken, SC, which is about the same size as Griffin, they have a Thanksgiving meal for the entire downtown community, a sit-down community meal. We could explore that, and someone mentioned the Sixth Street Bridge as a good area. Last year there were more than 4000 participants in Aiken, with everyone bringing food and ideas. Aiken began this Thanksgiving event 70 years ago, and it is still bringing people together today. Sometimes you bring people to your church instead of bringing your church to them.

Commissioner McCord can't pinpoint any areas of Griffin that were run down when he was a child which have seen great improvements. Some cities can point to changing the whole complexion of an area, such as Turner Field in Atlanta as a prime example. He thinks the City Park area with a golf course, city park, medical center, doctors, etc. has all infrastructure needed to do so much and could be a source of pride. When Fredrick Gardiner first arrived, he took him to Scales and English, and Fredrick could not believe folks actually lived there. Public Works needs to be moved; their shop sits on the most beautiful piece of hill in Griffin. The town was built on and around the railroad, but greenspace could mitigate that noise. Commissioner Flowers agreed, saying noise abatement is important for quality of life. Commissioner McCord said Sun City could have located around Airport Road and City Park and had all the amenities one could want. We'll have golf course, golf paths, medical center, walking tracks, city park, and other downtown amenities. People who live in the outlying areas are only layover type folks who commute and don't come downtown for much. He paraphrased the City Manager, who maintains we have no problems that money can't solve.

Commissioner Morrow noted they could use sidewalks and cart paths to develop the area by the park. The City could revamp this area with different connections. A Master Plan could connect with pedestrian and bike pathways. Bob Dull does have a great master plan, agreed Commissioner Todd., and the airport moving will open up a whole lot of things. Commissioner Flowers observed there was no cohesive approach to debunking the SPLOST fallacies just before the referendum, and our efforts were too little too late. Next, they will need to get ahead of negative rumors. To be too late is to lose positive support. Early voting was already going on by the time some things were addressed.

Commissioner Todd overhead some criticism by Sun City residents who do not totally understand issues. They see Griffin differently but feel it is too expensive and that local governments are not accountable. Such conversations can be good selling opportunities to detail taxes to citizenry.

Commissioner Morrow said he had been around the state with GMA and most everyplace has a Mayor that represents that city ... a voice and visible presence with which people can identify. We work together but changing the chairmanship every year is counterproductive to getting things done. He personally thinks we have failed in some instances because no cohesive person was in place to

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represent. We are somewhat leaderless, but some noted this would require changing the form of government. This led to a discussion of how 53-55% of our population is African-American, and so we should be able to elect an African-American as mayor but because of how her people vote, Commissioner Reid-Ward felt we would not have a fair opportunity to elect an African-American mayor. Chairman Hollberg said he campaigned and suggested this, but Commissioner Reid-Ward countered that he should check records and see how many in Fairmont actually vote. For Commissioner Reid-Ward personally, it makes no difference what color the Mayor may be, but he or she would need to have the same interests communitywide. There were no African-American elected officials here before 1986 except for one. With the Justice ruling, came fair representation.

Mr. Whalen said they petition the legislature today for a mayor/council form of government.

Commissioner Flowers noted the reality is there is some disparity, even though some try to minimize that marginalization. Anything is possible, but Griffin is not yet past those thresholds, and a huge section of our population feels removed as active participants from the City. If we change and get a Mayor to represent all, some might even feel more disenfranchised. She felt we simply haven't bridged that gap yet and other places who have done this are not any better than us. Commissioner McCord felt a mayor could work. He tries to convey through his actions that race is not a hindrance; he doesn't believe anyone is better than him and he is no better than another. Folks don't all think alike and social media spews negativity. Commissioner Morrow said if we don't break with problems of the past we are destined to repeat them. Commissioner Reid-Ward felt we aren't there yet.

Chairman Hollberg advised we can pass this along to the Archway Partnership for further exploration. Money has to be a priority of the City, but we need to use resources wisely. Monitoring/tracking important, and he liked identification of the two highest crime areas. Personally, he is excited about our direction, but urged everyone to feel free to come up with new ideas. There are opportunities to move forward with improvements on the north side that may help, and the idea with GMA is spot on; the homestead exemption possibility may be slim, but we have to start somewhere. Commissioner Morrow will submit concepts discussed today if so directed. If we can get some things in the queue, that will be good. The Mayor concept may be explored through Archways. We do lack consistency and continuity. He is willing to compromise on some things, but he does not want to go to court on issues like Service Delivery Strategy and double taxation.

Commissioner Flowers has seen the influence of the Workforce Investment Board and some updates here and there, but she wanted to see more proactive approaches to getting people who are prepared to work in viable positions. Southern Crescent Technical College is more than willing to adapt to facilitate this process. There may be internship opportunities and relaxing of initial requirements for hiring, as well. So many people have small blips on their records that ensure there is no opportunity for them to get in the door. We have a viable labor pool but need to better utilize it. Commissioner Todd said SCTC now administers Workforce Investment and could probably assist.

Commissioner Flowers wondered why we would be willing to train those held to a higher standard that we know will be leaving, rather than allowing someone to fill a position who may not have a pristine employment record but would make a productive employee. She felt it prudent to look within the community for people who will make good employees and be willing to stay, even if there are imperfect records. Perhaps we can find ways to be more open. Commissioner Morrow agreed, saying in years past these type blemishes might not follow you the way computerized records do now. So many people would like to work here but cannot, so why train those we know are going to leave?

Chairman Hollberg asked if anyone in HR could help with this issue of blemishes on records. Miles Neville, Human Resources Director, said the City looks at folks first and do criminal backgrounds almost last. This are no concretes, but there are particulars the City will look at. There are many who have left or retired who actually have records and some even have felonies, so there are efforts at remediating some of these blemishes already. The lack of soft skills, some felt, should not be allowed to hamper recruiting good workers. Commissioner Flowers noted that her brother who is 24 never actually had any real employment experience – just fast food establishments. As the recession hit he was just coming into working age. There is an entire segment of the workforce who has no real work experience because of the economic downturn. She felt that as one of largest employers and a local government, the City needs to take more active role in creatively funneling people who truly want to work into the local workforce. Mr. Smith noted the City uses interns now and certainly will explore if it can do more to be responsive to this segment of the labor pool.

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Chairman Hollberg commended the Police Department, Code Enforcement, Planning and Development and others for their efforts to curb crime. There appears to be a new attitude that he would like to see continue. He had no sympathy for those committing crimes but rather felt we should do more to address our serious crime issues. Citizens of Griffin deserve a safe and wholesome place to live. As for some of the more pressing issues downtown like the homeless population and its inherent problems, the Downtown Development Authority needs to develop more stringent ways to handle and look at the downtown district. Griffin appears to be on its way to being a magnet for this segment of the population. We need to seriously work toward addressing these issues in whatever legal means necessary. Prospects do not want to invest in a downtown location when it consistently does not meet their expectations. He wondered about a greater police presence.

Commissioner McCord wanted everyone to remember that he/she could be in that same situation at any given time, so he was very cautious about appearing to not be in favor of feeding or assisting these homeless. We are a diverse community and any of us could find ourselves on the other side.

City Manager Smith agreed but noted we have to balance helping the homeless and hungry with our mandate to not end up hurting others or the City in the process. Commissioner McLemore noted that politically correct talk could be part of the ongoing dialogue, but he agreed we need to find a balance.

Commissioner Morrow asked if cameras downtown could be utilized to help in this area. He also would like to see bike/pedestrian paths connecting to a master plan for parks. Sidewalks could be added as budget permits. He noted this workshop was not about budget but rather about wishes.

Commissioner Flowers reiterated a need for signage on walking trails/golf cart paths at City Park.

Some discussion was held regarding the County's subsidizing the first 60 children per day using the City Pool. The load limit for swimmers in the pool at any given time is 200. The golf course, while an asset, is not self-sustaining, and some thought may be given to privatizing it.

Mr. Smith said it was not about budget, but all of these wishes tax funding and the City also needs to enhance its revenue streams to accommodate increased costs. We need people in vacancies, but how will we handle increased salaries and benefits. Yes, workforce retention needs to be addressed, but the reality is that the money must come from somewhere. He will fight for raises to be implemented, along with all these other issues, but with a reduced tax digest and taxes, it is difficult to reconcile. There are some dollars being saved during the period of vacancies, but when filled, these will be factors for next year and ongoing. With not much room left in which to cut costs, the City needs additional revenue. HB 170 will also place additional hardship on cities for transportation funds.

Commissioner Morrow wondered where the savings were from some of the planned shared efficiencies the City had implemented, such as automatic meter reading, projects that have come in under budget (AMI), etc. The City's budget would be short had those monies not been available.

In summary, we have much to consider as a result of this workshop:

- Crime reduction (as the number one concern) and long-term safer City environment
- Substandard Housing and Code Enforcement efforts
- 800 MHz
- 911 Fiber and CAD
- New Airport and debt
- Community Master Plan for greater connectivity
- Tourism efforts and signage
- Increased revenue – financial stability – ratepayer stability
- Roof repair to historic City Hall
- Curb the inherent problems with the downtown homeless population
- KIA plaques in downtown
- Paving, sidewalks and pocket parks
- Workforce recruitment and retention
- Home Rule/Homestead Exemption
- HB 170 to remove transportation dollars from local governments
- SPLOST projects
- Hotel/Motel tax
- Public Works infrastructure improvements and debt

The workshop was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.