

CITY OF METTER
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2018
5:30 P.M.

A regular meeting was held at City Hall on Monday, October 8, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Attending the meeting were the following officials:

Mayor Edwin O. Boyd
Councilwoman Amy Harrelson
Councilwoman Chyrileen Kilcrease
Councilman Paul MacGregor
Councilwoman Rashida Taylor
City Manager Mandi Cody
City Clerk Angie Conner
Director of Tourism/Business Development Heidi Jeffers
Chief of Police Robert Shore
Public Works Director Cliff Hendrix
Carvy Snell – Metter Advertiser

Attending the meeting were the following guests:

Bryan Aasheim – County Administrator
Cheryl Aasheim – Co-Chair Grayson Trapnell Special Committee for Animal Services
Houston Holloway – Holloway Construction
Lance Holloway – Holloway Construction
Lynn Ashcraft – Georgia Department of Community Affairs
James McKie – Candidate for City Council
Susan Williams – Chair Grayson Trapnell Special Committee for Animal Services

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Mayor Boyd called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilwoman Harrelson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

INVOCATION

Councilwoman Kilcrease gave the invocation.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Councilman MacGregor seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to approve the following minutes:

- a) Regular Meeting, Monday, September 10, 2018, 5:30 p.m.
- b) Public Hearing, Wednesday, September 12, 2018, 5:30 p.m.
- c) Public Hearing, Wednesday, September 19, 2018, 11:00 a.m.
- d) Public Hearing, Wednesday, September 19, 2018, 6:00 p.m.
- e) Called Meeting, Wednesday, September 19, 2018, 6:30 p.m.

Councilwoman Harrelson seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business listed on the agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution Approving New Checking Account

Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to approve a resolution allowing city staff to open a checking account at Queensborough National Bank & Trust for the Georgia Grown/Metter Made Program at the Metter Visitor's Center. Councilman MacGregor seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

2019 Local Maintenance Improvement Program Grant

Councilman MacGregor made a motion to approve Bay Street, between Washington St. and E. Lee Street, and S. College Street, between West Hiawatha St. and Pine Street, for repaving through the 2019 Local Maintenance Improvement Program Grant of the Georgia Department of Transportation. Councilwoman Harrelson seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Request to Extend Water & Sewer Lines on Fortner Road

Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to consider a request to extend water and sewer lines on Fortner Road to incentivize development of two single family properties. Councilman MacGregor seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Request to Block Off S. Rountree Street During Fall Festival

Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to approve a request from First Baptist Church Metter to be given the privilege of having the block in front of the church and city buildings (S. Rountree St.) to be closed during the Fall Festival Event on October 31st from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Councilman MacGregor seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Alcohol License Application for Oak Tree Express

Councilman MacGregor made a motion to authorize the City Manager to approve the issuance of the following license for package sales for off premises consumption of beer and wine upon applicant’s compliance with applicable life safety and building codes and other requirements of law:

Business: Shivaay Trading, LLC DBA Oak Tree Express Chevron
Applicant: Dhruv Vinod Kumar Patel

Councilwoman Kilcrease seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

WORK SESSION ITEMS

Importance and Purposes of Volunteer Boards

Heidi Jeffers, Director of Tourism/Business Development and Lynn Ashcraft representing the Georgia Department of Community Affairs gave a presentation explaining the importance and purposes of volunteer boards working with the Department of Tourism and Business Development: Downtown Development Authority, Main Street, and Destination Marketing Organization.

They explained that the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is a legal entity. It is eligible for bonds and grants. It usually consists of seven members. Per the Official Code of Georgia, Downtown Development Authorities formed statutorily have seven directors. Directors shall be: (1) Taxpayers who reside in the city limits; (2) be owners or operators of businesses located within the downtown development area and who shall be taxpayers residing in the county, or (3) be persons having a combination of these qualifications.

At least four of the seven must have or represent a party who has an economic interest in the redevelopment and revitalization of the downtown development area. One director appointed to the board may not meet the first requirements, but may reside outside the county; provided however, that such appointed director owns a business within the downtown development area and is a resident of the State of Georgia. One director may also serve as a City Councilperson.

Metter’s DDA was statutorily formed in 1985 and was re-activated in 2014. The DDA has been inactive since at least 2016. Two Directors appointed in 2014 continues to qualify to serve – Mr. Pernal Franklin and Mayor Ed Boyd.

The Official Code of Georgia Section 48-13-50.2 defines a “Destination Marketing Organization” as a private sector nonprofit organization or other private entity which is exempt from federal income tax under Section 501c (6) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 that is supported by hotel/motel tax, government budget allocations, private membership, or any combination thereof. The primary responsibilities of DMO are to encourage travelers to visit their destinations, encourage meetings and expositions in the area, and provide visitor assistance and support as needed. A DMO is required in order to continue collection of the hotel/motel tax.

The Main Street Program encourages communities to take steps to enact long term change, while also implementing short term, inexpensive and placed-based activities that attract people to the commercial core and create a sense of enthusiasm and momentum about their community. Designated community programs have been instrumental in leading the state in historic preservation, small business development, expansion of the state’s employment base, leveraging private investment, increasing tourism and providing a positive road map for public-private partnerships. The direct involvement of an active board of directors and active volunteers is vital to this process. Many Main Street programs were originated by or have merged with other organizations, which have a broader agenda (such as a chamber of commerce or a convention and visitors bureau.). A local Main Street Program with this structure has a better chance of long-term success.

The Downtown Development Authority and the Destination Marketing Organization can be the same board and staff. Ms. Cody, City Manager, said that the city needs a DDA and a DMO. She recommended to use one board for both purposes under the direction of Ms. Jeffers.

Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to reinstate the Downtown Development Authority and Main Street Program and allow the board to serve as the City’s Destination Marketing Organization under the leadership of Ms. Heidi Jeffers, Director of Tourism/Business Development for the City of Metter. Councilwoman Harrelson seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Board Vacancies and Appointments

Ms. Cody explained that several volunteer boards serve the City of Metter and its constituents. Board membership allows for community involvement in a special area of interest for the member and serves to advise Council on a myriad of issues. Unfortunately, many of our boards are experiencing vacancies. Without the requisite membership these boards cannot fulfill their intended purpose.

Ms. Cody presented the board vacancies as follows:

BOARDS WITH VACANCIES AND EXPIRING TERMS

As of September 28, 2018

BOARD	NUMBER OF VACANCIES OR REAPPOINTMENTS
Tree Board	2 (Ms. Lucille Adams reappointment and a vacant position)
Library Board	1 (to replace Felix Johnston) no recommendation from Board at this time
Airport Authority	3 (1 to replace Marty Franklin – 2 for term length)
Planning Commission	1 (to replace Jeffery Hildebrandt’s unexpired term)
Zoning Appeals Board	5 vacant positions

Downtown Development Authority	6 vacant positions
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Ms. Cody explained the purpose and importance of each of these boards.

Tree Board:

Section 12.16.070 of the Metter Municipal Code establishes the Tree Board as an advisory board to Council. This Code provides that the Tree Board shall consist of six voting members and one public ex-officio nonvoting member. Additionally, it requires that at least two of the members be professionally trained and experienced in a tree-related field. The Tree Board is charged with advising Mayor and Council on matters relating to the implementation of the urban forestry code and tree management in the City, including appropriate funding mechanisms.

Having a Tree Board is one method of meeting the standards for being recognized as a Tree City USA. However, there are no specific requirements for board composition. The City of Metter has been recognized as a Tree City USA for thirty (30) years.

Library Board:

Pursuant to Article V Section I of the Constitution for the L.C. Anderson Memorial Library, the Candler County Library Board shall be composed of nine (9) members appointed by the governmental agencies financially supporting the Library on a regular basis-three (3) of which shall be appointed by the City Council of Metter. This group works in coordination with the staff and boards of the Statesboro Regional Library System to support our local library.

Airport Authority:

Six members of the community are appointed for three years each to serve as the governing body of the Metter Candler Airport Authority to operate the airport. The City and the County each appoint three members. Apparently, there was some historical confusion and members were appointed for six-year terms each. The City and County Attorneys concur that all six seats should be re-appointed for three-year staggered terms. Each governing authority should appoint one member with a term to expire in 2019, one member to expire in 2020, and one to expire in 2021.

Current Board Members are Bobby Jones, Ralph Clifton, Marty Franklin, John Jones, Jr., Cliff Hendrix, and Bill Walden. During the September 10th County Commission meeting the County Commissioners voted to re-appoint the following members to the Airport Authority Board:

- Bill Walden (Seat 6) – Term expires on 12/31/2018
- Ralph Clifton (Seat 2) – Term expires on 12/31/2019
- John Jones, Jr. (Seat 4) – Term expires on 12/31/2020

Current Chairman John Jones, Jr. has advised Mayor Boyd that Mr. Marty Franklin does not wish to be reappointed. Mr. Jones recommends the appointment of Mr. Ty Tyson for a three-year term, to expire in 2021. Mr. Cliff Hendrix has expressed his willingness to continue to serve. Council should consider the policy of appointing employees as voting members to Boards it funds. Mr. Bobby Jones also wishes to continue to serve.

Councilman MacGregor made a motion to approve the following members to the Airport Authority:

Bobby Jones (Seat 1) – Term expires on 12/31/2019

Cliff Hendrix (Seat 5) – Term expires on 12/31/2020

Ty Tyson (Seat 3) – Term expires on 12/31/2021 (replacing Marty Franklin)

Councilwoman Kilcrease seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals:

The Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals are part of the City's Zoning ordinance.

The Zoning Board, which has no members, and has not met in more than two (2) years, determines appeals from staff decisions related to zoning interpretations and grants or denies variances and special exceptions (conditional use permits) from the zoning ordinance.

The Planning Commission, which is short one member, also has not met in more than two (2) years. This Commission serves as an advisory board to Council on matters of zoning ordinance amendments, plats, and map amendments (re-zoning).

Land use and permitting applications will increase as our economic development activity increase. Currently, we have one conditional use and one rezoning application being processed. Having two boards, to serve a singular ordinance proves cumbersome for customers and staff. Ms. Cody's recommendation is to revise the Zoning Ordinance to eliminate the Zoning Board of Appeals in favor of taking all land use decisions to the Planning Commission for advisory review and then to Council for judgement. Appeals of staff determinations in the zoning ordinance could also be taken to Council.

On a related note, the zoning ordinance requires a thirty (30) day wait period between the Planning Commission advisory review and judgement by the City Council. Ms. Cody recommended to eliminate this unnecessary delay. State law requires that zoning map and ordinance amendments be advertised, and public hearings be held prior to judgements being rendered. The City could (and in Ms. Cody's view, should) adopt a policy that all variances, special exceptions, rezoning, and zoning ordinance amendments be advertised, the property signed, and public hearings held prior to judgement. However, we should also eliminate unnecessary delays subject to those considerations.

The consensus of the council was for Ms. Cody to revise the ordinance to allow for the recommended changes.

Design Options for Metter Welcome Center

Ms. Jeffers gave a presentation of improvement and design options for the Metter Visitors Center to promote the Metter Made/Georgia Grown strategy.

The building phase for the Welcome Center includes building survey, design and construction drawings for the remodeling of the existing Welcome Center. The time frame for the completion is the week of November 12th. The cost estimate is \$5,000.

The parking area by the main entrance of the Welcome Center has exposed roots. This phase will include the site work between the parking lot and the pond. It will require a civil engineer and a current survey in order to make sure it drains properly, and we don't do anything to harm the trees. This phase will probably run about \$2,500 for the survey, around \$3,500 for civil engineering and \$2,500 for the structures design and bidding; for a total of an estimated \$8,500.

Councilman MacGregor made a motion to authorize City Manager, Mandi Cody, to engage architect services in amount not to exceed \$15,000 to design interior and exterior improvements to visitor center to include lighting and shelving; parking lot improvements; construction of walkway; and tree protection. Councilwoman Kilcrease seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

City of Metter Sanitation Services, Rates, and Issues

Background

In June of this year, Council passed the Fiscal Year 2019 Budget with a recommendation from the City Manager to increase rates for the provision of sanitation services within the City of Metter. This recommendation was made to recover the direct annual cost of this service provision. While preparing to implement the approved rate changes, management found discrepancies in billing practices and ordinance provisions that rendered it advisable to delay implementation and seek Council feedback regarding certain service issues. We have identified the issues and seek direction from Council.

Services Provided/Rates Charged:

Sanitation services provided by the City of Metter are as follows:

Residential Sanitation Services:

Each residence inside the City of Metter receives three (3) sanitation services per week. They are:

- Once weekly polycart pickup for household garbage;
- Once weekly inert waste pickup for yard debris; and
- Once weekly bulk waste pickup for junk.

Council approved rate changes for residential packages from \$17 per month to \$25 per month.

This provides 156 services per year to each household in Metter for only \$1.92 per service.

Commercial Sanitation Services:

Each business inside the City of Metter may receive five (5) sanitation services per week. They are:

- Polycart pickup for general garbage three (3) times per week;

- Once weekly inert waste pickup for yard debris; and
- Once weekly bulk waste pickup for bulk waste (junk).

Commercial rates were approved to move from \$23 to \$39 per month. This provides 260 services per year to businesses in Metter for only \$1.80 per service.

The rates currently charged for sanitation have not been adjusted since 2013, when they were increased by \$1 per month. The city conducted an inhouse rate and service cost analysis and determined that current rates were not recovering the cost of providing the service. Therefore, the service had to be supported by taxes collected in the general fund. The new rate proportions the rates to the services received, charges the direct user of the service, and reflects an annual operating budget cost recovery calculation. It does not include recovery of capital replacement needs or reserve fund cost.

The City of Metter currently provides sanitation services to approximately 1517 residential and 153 commercial customers.

Rates are inclusive and include pick up and tippage at the landfill. Pick-ups are at the curb and based on a route system. Work orders are not necessary but are accepted.

Issue Identification:

The following issues were identified during staff implementation:

1. Should Chapter 13.16 of the Metter Municipal Code be amended to authorize the assessment of a user fee for yard debris pick up service?

- a. Currently, most utility customers within the City of Metter are assessed \$3 per month for yard debris pick up. (This includes commercial establishments that may not desire this service). However, this user fee has not been codified in a municipal ordinance. Meeting minutes reflect that Council first approved the fee at \$1 per month in 1998, moved this to \$2 per month in 2005, and \$3 per month in 2008. The fee has been assessed on every city utility account at \$3 per month since 2008. Management's recommendation is to amend the ordinance to authorize this assessment and adopt appropriate regulations.
- b. For properties with multiple units, such as apartments, should this fee be assessed for each unit?
 - i. Most multi-unit properties are being assessed a per unit fee for yard debris. A few are not. Management recommends a per unit fee as a fair way to assess the time, cost, and amount of inert waste generated by a property.
- c. Should property owners be billed in the event of multi-tenant properties that the City can't independently bill? For example, commercial properties on a master meter. Management recommends yes so that fees may be recovered.
- d. Should home occupations be charged as residential rather than commercial services? Management recommends yes as the waste of a home occupation is more residential than commercial in nature.
- e. Are there regulations that should be considered for this service?
 - i. For example, should there be a prohibition against placing debris on another's property?

- ii. Should there be a prohibition against placing debris on public property (street medians and alleys)?
- iii. Should there be a prohibition against blocking ditches and drainage infrastructure?
- iv. Should dumping be prohibited?
- v. Should blowing or sweeping of debris into the street be prohibited?
- vi. Should private contractors be required to remove yard debris?

Management recommends approving all of the above regulations in order to protect private and public property from dumping.

2. Should Chapter 13.16 of the Metter Municipal Code be amended to authorize the collection of a fee for bulk waste (junk) pickup?

- a. A separate fee has not been adopted by the City for this service. Management built cost recovery of this into the fee recommendations for Fiscal Year 2019.
- b. Items b – e, and their recommendations, above would also apply to this issue.

3. Section 13.16.090 of the Metter Municipal Code requires that all private disposal services file an application to the city to be approved by City Council for refuse collection. An application fee and franchise fee are required. Those using the private service are not exempt from monthly City service charges.

- a. There is no record of this application process being enforced. Should this requirement stay on the books?
 - b. Records indicate that approximately 70 commercial accounts within the City have dumpsters. These accounts are NOT paying the commercial pick up charge. They are paying the \$3yard debris monthly charge.
 - c. These private providers are NOT paying a franchise fee to the City of Metter.
- Management recommends that applications not require Council approval, but that Council either require the payment of franchise fees by these providers or consider providing this service.

4. What establishments must use a roll off (dumpster) container?

- a. The ordinance states that 12 or more apartment units. Some multi-unit residential properties have a roll off; some have polycarts.
- b. Should each unit be assessed a yard debris and/or bulk waste charge if the establishment is permitted a roll-off rather than poly carts?
- c. Should there be regulations to accompany the use of the roll off?
 - i. Should it be required that containers be enclosed and/or that lids remain closed to prevent litter?
 - ii. Should it be required that containers be maintained in a sanitary manner?
- d. Is Council interested in exploring the provision of this service by the City?

Management recommends treating similar situated properties the same. For example, have one rule for all apartment complexes, one rule for all commercial establishments. It is also recommended that containers be maintained and litter free.

5. Staff identified at least six (6) commercial accounts that, by the customer's request, is not receiving nor being charged for service.

- a. Section 13.16.040 states that "All occupied residences and commercial businesses shall pay an amount to defray the cost of the city's garbage collection service according to the rate and schedule as may be now or hereafter set and established by the Mayor and Council."

Management recommends that all customers be charged for the service. This is the only method to ensure cost recovery and the continued provision of sanitation services to our residents and businesses.

Mayor and City Council directed Ms. Cody, City Manager, to bring forward an ordinance for sanitation rates that provides for rates and regulations as discussed.

Discussion of Initiating a City of Metter Stop the Litter Enforcement Campaign

Recently, several members of our community have addressed Council regarding the issue of litter in our City. In response, Ms. Cody has researched the municipal ordinance and found that we do have some tools that could be utilized to reduce littering in our City. She presented them with a copy of a proposed ordinance.

It is Ms. Cody's recommendation that we initiate enforcement of this ordinance in our City. Enforcement could begin with public education campaigns, and soft techniques. Additionally, we would work with establishments to identify means of reducing litter and escaping debris, measure they can take, and how we can help. Punitive measures, such as citations, would only be taken for the most serious or repetitive issues.

Ms. Cody also recommended that Council consider updating the ordinance to provide additional prohibitions against the following:

1. Establishments maintaining litter in their parking areas;
2. Establishments or persons allowing their disposal to escape into the street or other private properties;
3. Dumping of debris on another's property; and
4. Dumpsters or other containers remaining open for debris to escape.

These measures could be enforced by police officers trained in code compliance issues. Additionally, we should look for ways for the community to participate, such as a reporting mechanism for neighbors to use when they witness illegal dumping or other issues.

For future measure the City should explore to assist in abating this issue include litter pick up from a mandatory community service program through the Metter Municipal Court (being formed now); a possible fee-based street sweeping service for private property; and the State's scrap tire abatement program.

Litter is an unsightly nuisance that erodes confidence and pride in a community. Left untended it grows into an issue that clogs drains, causes flooding, and causes environmental and health problems. Our citizens have asked for a resolution here and it is Ms. Cody's recommendation that we move forward with these measures to provide it.

Mayor and Council agreed for Ms. Cody and Chief Shore to initiate the City of Metter Stop the Litter Enforcement Campaign and bring forward ordinance amendments for review.

Discussion to Policy Priority for Animal Control and Sheltering Services

The City of Metter Animal Control Services (ACS) was established through the city council and consists of 1-Animal Control Officer (ACO) and 1-Animal Shelter Caretaker. The ACS is under the supervision and control of the Chief of Police. The animal shelter is situated on Hiawatha Street inside the city limits of Metter and is capable of housing a total of 16 dogs. There is an area within the shelter that is used to house a set of cat cages that can accommodate up to 13 cats and there is a small cage that is used to keep up to 2-injured, sick, or feral cats. The current budget for the Animal Services Department is approximately \$100,000 a year. This service is also provided to Candler County as outlined in the Service Delivery Strategy.

ACO Tommy Condrey has served as the Animal Control Officer since 2003. ACO Condrey's primary responsibilities are to answer calls for unwanted, stray, neglected, and abused animals within the City of Metter and within the limits of Candler County. ACO Condrey also transports animals to and from the shelter and assist in animal shelter duties.

The Animal Shelter Caretaker position is filled by Jennifer Kirby, who has been employed in this role since December 2017. Kirby has numerous years of experience volunteering and working with Sweet Onion Animal Protection Society (SOAPS), which is a non-profit animal protection group. Kirby also spends free time providing rescue for animals at her home. Kirby's primary duties consist of care and treatment of the animals at the shelter. Kirby also coordinates the adoptions and/or rescues of animals from the shelter through her use of social media and knowledge of rescues in the area.

Chief Shore has been certified as a Georgia Peace Officer since 1992. Most of Chief Shore's experience in law enforcement has been in the supervision of drug enforcement units. Chief Shore began employment with the City of Metter in October of 2016 as the Captain over the Uniformed Patrol Division. In November 2017 Chief Shore was appointed as the Interim Chief of Police and appointed as Chief in January 2017. Chief Shore had no prior experience in Animal Services.

RECENT HISTORY

Through City Manager Mandi Cody, the Metter City Council authorized the Grayson Trapnell Special Committee for Animal Services to become a committee to city council. Initially the Animal Services Committee was formed to make suggestions on the use of funds that were bequest by Mr. Grayson Trapnell; however, through discussions made from the committee, City Manager elected to propose that the committee also be used to make recommendations to city council concerning the humane treatment of animals.

Prior to fiscal year 2018, the supervision and management of the Animal Services were the responsibility of the Public Works Director, however in FY 2018 the supervision and management were transferred to the Chief of Police. Also, in FY 2018, the Metter City Council added an additional \$10,000 to the Animal Services budget to assist in the humane treatment of animals, along with hiring a fulltime caretaker position.

In November 2018, Chief Shore was appointed as the Interim Chief and assumed management of the ACS. During the first month, Chief Shore reached out and contacted the committee and discussed formalizing the committee on January 2018. In January 2018 the committee met and began to formalize the committee. In the January 2018 meeting, the committee set a regular meeting schedule and within a few months had selected Susan Williams as the Chairperson and Cheryl Aasheim as the Vice Chairperson.

In January 2018, ACS responded to a complaint concerning a dog that was in temperatures below freezing without adequate shelter. ACS and officers of the Metter Police Department responded numerous times to the residence and observed the conditions and the dog. It was determined that the owners of the dog were operating within the limits of the law and within city ordinances. The decision of the ACS and the police department was not acceptable to some members of the committee and to some citizens and as a result these individuals took to social media to voice their displeasure with the ACS and the police department. Over the next several months, Chief Shore worked with the Animals Services Committee to introduce a joint recommendation to the city council to amend the ordinance to define adequate shelter. The city council adopted the recommendations and the amended ordinances took effect July 1, 2018.

In February 2018, Officers of the Metter Police Department received information that there was an injured dog at the hospital. Upon arrival, officers met with the complainant and learned that a dog showed up at the hospital and was having difficulty walking. The responding officers contacted ACO Condrey who advised that he would have a delayed response to the scene. Members of the community were unsatisfied with the response and transported the animal to a veterinarian hospital in Savannah, Georgia. While located at the hospital, the community members found out that the dog was very aged and had several known medical conditions. The next day, ACO Condrey was contacted by the owner, who lived near the hospital and advised that the dog had a long medical history including being blind. ACO Condrey worked with the owner in having the dog returned. Following this incident, the protocol for responding after hours was amended for the police department along with animal control services.

In April 2018, ACO Condrey was notified by a person who adopted a dog and learned that the puppy had contracted Parvo. The owner of the puppy agreed to treat the puppy at its own cost. Immediately after receiving information, ACO Condrey contacted the Georgia Department of Agriculture and the animal shelter isolated the area where the dog had been housed. Within a few days, ACO Condrey had a second adopted dog with possible Parvo. ACO Condrey transported the second dog to the veterinarian clinic where the dog was identified as having Parvo and was treated. Upon learning of the second dog, Chief Shore and ACO Condrey quarantined the shelter and notified the Department of Agriculture. After the quarantine, citizens took to social media and criticized the Metter Police Department and the Animal Control Services for delaying closing the shelter. A few days later, the Department of Agriculture visited the shelter and advised that our protocol procedures for the handling of the Parvo incident were appropriate.

In late June 2018, officers of the Metter Police Department were notified about a Husky dog that had injuries to its ears. Officers responded to the scene but were unable to locate the Husky. The next day, ACO Condrey followed up with the caretaker of the animal and negotiated with the caretaker to take the dog to the veterinarian at the beginning of the month of July due to the

financial status of the caretaker. In the days that followed, a lot of citizens took to social media and made a public outcry that the animal was being abused and that the animal control service was failing to take appropriate action. There were also numerous calls to the police department from numerous persons from around the United States concerning Animal Control's handling of Husky. On the day agreed on by the caretaker, ACO Condrey contacted the caretaker and assisted the caretaker in obtaining an appointment, however the animal could not be seen until two (2) days later. The caretaker kept the appointment and the Husky was treated and released to the caretaker with medication.

The next day, Chief Shore learned that the Husky did not have adequate shelter and ACO Condrey traveled to the residence and gave the caretaker through the weekend to obtain adequate shelter. ACO Condrey also offered to obtain local assistance in obtaining adequate shelter if needed. A small group of citizens continued a negative social media campaign to the extent that the owner gave the Husky to a rescue group two (2) days later. Even after the rescue group obtained the dog, a small group continued to criticize the animal control service for allowing the rescue group to take possession of the dog.

In July 2018, the animal shelter began a drain repair project and a floor refinishing project that was mandated by the Georgia Department of Agriculture. To complete this project, it required that all animals be removed from the premises. All the animals were relocated to different shelters or rescues and arrangements were made with area shelters to house animals in emergency situations. This basically afford ACO Condrey to house animals that were part of an investigation, neglected, abused, or sick. Chief Shore briefed the Committee numerous times about the projects. It was conveyed to the committee that during the drain repair project that the shelter would be on a modified housing status, meaning that we could possibly take a few animals at a time; however, during the floor refinishing project, all the animals would have to be removed and animals would be handled on a case by case basis in emergency situations. The closing of the shelter was also put out on social media and in the Metter Advertiser. A week into the project, it was learned that all sewer access to the shelter would be cut off until completion of the project. With that the animal shelter was closed.

In the days that followed, several of the committee members and citizens made several calls to Animal Shelter, Chief Shore, City Manager Cody, and other city officials concerning the plan for the animals during the closing of the shelter. While most stated that they did not understand the words "emergency plan", some thought that we should have made other arrangements to shelter the animals. Some of this group again took to social media with negative comments.

Additionally, the City and Animal Control staff have received a number of complaints regarding the Shelter's inability (at times) to take in additional animals due to the Shelter being at full capacity. We have also received a number of complaints that Animal Control is not always available to retrieve stray animals immediately upon a call.

Grayson Trapnell Special Committee for Animal Services

Upon City Manager Cody being appointed as the city manager, she began conversation with members of the community who were interested in the humane treatment of animals and who had

an interest in the \$100,000 bequest. City Manager had numerous conversations with this group from the Grayson Trapnell Special Committee for Animal Services in order ensure that the bequest was spent in a manner that best respected the wishes of the donor, Mr. Trapnell. The Committee made recommendations to the city council concerning improvements and changes that they believed need to be made on the shelter and in the operation of the animal services. These details were published in a proposal that was forwarded to council¹ in May 2017.

In July 2018, the committee was recognized by the City of Metter City Council as the animal services committee a standing advisory committee to council. The committee is charged with giving recommendations to the city council that affects animal services within the City Limits of Metter. In January 2018, Chief Shore assisted the committee by hosting the first official meeting and setting a regular meeting schedule. The Committee waited until February 2018 to elect Chairperson Susan Williams and Co-Chairperson Cheryl Aasheim. Over the next several months, Chief Shore worked with the Committee on structure and to bring about a joint recommendation for an ordinance outlining adequate shelter for dogs. The proposal was adopted by council and ordinance took effect on July 1, 2018.

Animal Control Services

At the beginning of the Fiscal Year 2018, management of the Animal Control services was turned over to the Chief of Police. Also, a full-time caretaker position and an additional \$10,000 was placed in the budget to assist in the humane treatment of the animals. Prior to FY 2018, the management of the animal control was handled by the public works director and the shelter had a part-time caretaker.

Between November 2017 and January 2018, Chief Shore worked with the ACO and the City of Metter Purchasing Director to have a new heater purchased and installed at the animal shelter. Chief Shore also verified that protocol for the doors to the kennel are closed during inclement weather.

Between January 2018 and April 2018, Chief Shore worked with ACO Condrey in defining procedures for responding to calls for service. The procedures were defined as follows:

- Calls for service are routine and emergency.
- Routine calls for service are non-emergency calls that are handled during normal business hours. These include such things as strays, turn ins, or any non-life threatening conditions.
- Emergency calls for service are any calls where the animal or the public is at risk from injury or death.
- Routine calls will be answered within 24 hours of a work order being completed with city hall and Emergency will be handled as soon as possible.

In March of 2018, the animal control services upgraded their shelter management program. In upgrading the program, it gave online access to the program and allowed ACO Condrey to complete and access reports in the field. Additionally, it gave Chief Shore administrative control of the shelter management program and the ability to allow limited access to the program. Chief Shore was able to then give access to several committee members to assist in statistical reporting and to promote adoptions.

Beginning in April 2018, the animal control services began working with the committee to conduct a media campaign promoting the new ordinance changes. Animal control services and the committee utilized the shelter, police department, and other Facebook pages along with the Pineland Community Channel, and the Metter Advertiser. The animal control services also revamped a pamphlet titled “Proper Shelter and Care for Your Dog” and had copies printed to pass out to assist in promoting the new ordinance.

In July 2018, Chief Shore and ACO Condrey created procedures for ensuring that the basic needs for animals are appraised during calls for service. Chief Shore and ACO Condrey developed a form that can be filled out and shared with the owner of the animal to ensure that all the applicable needs for the animals are checked during a call for service.

Over the past several years, the Georgia Department of Agriculture reported that drain improvements and a resealing of the floors had to be done at the animal shelter. For this project to be completed, partial and full closure of the shelter had to be done. This information was conveyed to the public and to the animal services committee. Prior to the drain improvements beginning, the animals in the shelter were reduced in half as it was anticipated that one side of the shelter would be able to be used. As the drain project began, the animal control staff determined that the sewer system would be unusable and that the shelter needed to be closed. All the animals were either adopted, sent to available rescues, or taken to other nearby shelters. This closure was announced to the public through Facebook.

ISSUES

The last time that the animal control services policies were updated was in 2015. In reviewing the policy manual, there are no clear guideline nor any mission statement as to the role of the animal services committee. To move the animal control services forward is to define a clear mission statement that outlines the purpose of the Metter Animal Control Service and what is role the animal control services play in sheltering and enforcement.

The primary issue for Council is to determine the guiding policy for the provision of Animal Control and Sheltering services within the City of Metter. One option is to focus on reducing the homeless dog and cat population through concentrating on retrieval of strays and ensuring adequate shelter capacity for such through euthanizing. An alternative focus is the reduction of the homeless dog and cat population by concentrating on the care and rescue and adoption of animals in the care of the Shelter.

The second issue for Council to determine is whether the City of Metter will enforce ordinances and laws concerning non-emergent animal care and control issues through a policy of compassionate compliance or strict enforcement?

The current, unwritten policy of the Metter Animal Control Services is to focus on the care and rescue or adoption of animals that come into the Shelter; and to use benevolence in the enforcement of the local ordinances and observance in the enforcement of state law.

Council must note that animals- and the property that they maybe located on- are governed by state and federal laws and constitutional provisions regarding private property, search and seizure, the necessity of warrants, required standard of proof and other Constitutional protections of person and property. It is the common law of the land that animals are considered the private property of their owners and may not be examined or seized without proper legal authority. Additionally, city officials (even police officers) are prohibited from entering private property to inspect an animal or its conditions absent the proper legal authorizations. Generally speaking, this requires the issuance of a search warrant.

In reviewing reference material provided in the committee “City of Metter Animal Services Proposal”, the Humane Society International lists that a shelter purpose is defined as “teaching humane principles in the community, preventing animal cruelty and suffering, and enforcing animal protection laws.” It also indicates that a shelter with limited resources should “accept every animal.” The committee has also expressed a long-term goal of a “no-kill” shelter. At certain points, members of the committee have expressed discontent in humanely euthanizing certain animals.

The shelter currently attempts to keep as many cages open for animals, however at times the shelter becomes full of animals that are waiting out a mandatory time limit, waiting on rescue to retrieve animal, or animals that are highly adoptable.

Another epic issue is the feral cat situation. A feral cat is a cat that lives outdoors and has little to no contact with humans. Since feral cats live outdoors, they are susceptible to diseases and infections, some that are harmful to humans. Currently there is 2 cages available for feral/sick injured cats. The only solution that the animal control services has is to humanely euthanize all feral cats as quickly as possible.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The animal control services is a unique department in that it is a department that consistently being scrutinized by citizens who are very passionate about the humane treatment and welfare of animals. Due to this passion, the public is very critical about activities of the animal control services. In looking for possible solutions to the issues outlined above, there are many opinions as to the solution.

One option is that the animal control services adopt a policy that concentrates on taking in every animal that is reported. This would raise the number of animals that are euthanized each month exponentially. In this option, the concentration of the animal control services would be in keeping as many cages open as possible and not focusing on adoptions or rescuing the animals. In this option, the animal control services would use less discretion in enforcement, would issue more citations for the animal control violations, and swiftly seize animals. In this instance, it would better to expand the shelter than to create an adoption center.

Alternatively, Animal Control Services could limit the number of animals that are euthanized by attempting to adopt or rescue all animals that are adoptable.

The last option, and the recommendation of Staff, is to continue the current practice of balancing the humane euthanizing of animals in a systematic method that allows the shelter an attempt to adopt or rescue out as many animals as possible while providing space for incoming animals. This is a balancing act and sometimes it reduces the number of animals that are taken in. A long-term goal of this policy would be the opening of an Adoption Center to increase both space and adoptions. This would also continue the practice of compassionate compliance whereby the Animal Control Officer would weigh the severity of the crime against the need to act. This would give the Animal Control Officer the ability to work with individual towards compliance/education instead of punishment.

The feral cat situation is a separate and distinct issue. With feral cats one solution would be to have a trap/neuter/return program. This program would trap feral cats, have the cat neutered, and after the cat had healed it would be returned to area it was trapped. This program is cost prohibitive and would require the addition of feral cat area to accommodate the program. The other option would be to add an addition and take in as many feral cats as possible and humanely euthanize them as quickly as possible. The last option would be to use the current method of limiting the intake of feral cats or to stop taking in feral cats.

Mayor Boyd suggested having a study done for placing an adoption center on the Metter Police Department property. Mayor and Council authorized Ms. Cody to find someone to do a study and to contact the Georgia Department of Agriculture for their recommendations.

Ms. Cody said that she understands from council that they would like to continue to operate as we have been; we will focus on rescues and adoptions; we will continue to move toward designs for an adoption center; and we will continue to exercise with compassion and compliance with owners who are not necessarily meeting the letter of the law and will work with them on a reasonable time to meet that law before we take communitive action. Councilwoman Harrelson said that she would like to see a set time established to give the people to meet the law.

Councilwoman Harrelson made a motion to approve policy priority for Animal Control and Sheltering to focus on humane care through adoption and enforcement through compassionate compliance. Councilwoman Taylor seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Boyd said he is to see the city moving forward on all these issues as discussed tonight. He thanked the staff for the bench dedication ceremony held last Saturday. He thanked the Police Department and Fire Department for their help with the setting up and taking down the chairs. He reminded council to speak to people about serving on the volunteer boards. He also reminded council and staff to prepare for the storm that is coming.

Regular Meeting, October 8, 2018

STAFF REPORTS

All department heads submitted written reports.

ADJOURNMENT

After no further business, Councilwoman Taylor made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilman MacGregor seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Angie Conner, City Clerk