

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CALLED MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 2004, 8:00 A.M.**

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Present were Mayor Gary Pirkle, Mayor Pro Tem Ron Johnson, Council Members Marc Cohen, Steve Edwards, Clint Thompson and Nick Thompson. Also present were City Manager Bob Hail and City Clerk Jane Whittington.

This meeting is the third Public Hearing required for setting the millage rate. The Mayor opened the Public Hearing and asked if any citizens would like to speak. Hearing none he closed the Public Hearing and opened the floor to the Council to set the 2004 Millage Rate.

Council Member Ron Johnson stated that the millage rate could be rolled back to 3.72 and this would still generate around \$35,000 in revenue that could be used for police patrols. Council Member Cohen stated that if the millage rate stayed at 3.8, the other \$35,000 could be used to offset garbage costs.

Council Member Clint Thompson stated that he fully supports the idea of reducing taxes but with all that they are trying to do it does not make sense to him. When he hears talk of the proposed recreation center that would take about \$4.8 million and what about the costs of operating this center. It would take about \$500,000 to \$1 Million a year to operate it. This is in conjunction with the Council's desire to have a police department over the next five to eight years. While he would support a tax increase in reality with all the additional services they want to provide, and with inflation it does not all add up to him. In fact with all these factors he would consider something higher than 3.8. The City Manager must have some things in mind to recommend staying at 3.8 right now.

Council Member Johnson talked about the growth of the City. Every year we will be in the same predicament because of the growth. This is advertised as a tax increase and we could lower the rate instead of keeping it the same with this continued growth. He motioned to roll back the millage rate to 3.72 and take the \$35,000 additional revenue and put it into the police department.

Council Member Edwards stated that he liked Council Member Johnson's idea. It is creative but he wants to hear from the other Council Members. He agrees to put part of the revenue into additional police services and the balance of revenue will offset cost of services.

Council Member Cohen agreed that some of the funds be put into the police because we definitely need additional police protection.

The City Manager stated that the Budget was just increased \$80,000 at the last Council Meeting. We are growing but you need to spend additionally to offset this growth. You are adding employees and equipment. If he would have gotten the additional prison van

there would not have been money for this employee and truck that was approved. This year 1.2 million was brought across the board to balance the budget. He agreed that Council Member Johnson's point was admirable but he agrees with Clint in that the future needs don't allow for decreases right now. Maybe if we get a good commercial growth then they could be decreased. The operational costs of a sports center, if built, would be \$800,000.

Council Member Cohen stated that he would agree to keep the millage rate where it is and use some of those funds to offset cost of additional city services. The police department is very admirable and we need to have it because we definitely need more police protection. There are other things we need like the rising cost of trash services.

The Mayor stated that the money we were able to take out of the budget for a recreation person transferred from the money allocated for a prison van would increase the budget next year if a prison crew was available. There is the cost of the van and the guard.

Council Member Nick Thompson stated that he thinks Council Member Johnson's idea is good in theory. He agrees with Council Member C. Thompson in that the City has additional expenses. We definitely need more police patrols and whether new gas customers or growth can handle it he doesn't know. He does feel there are many uses for the additional funds. Maybe we could do something like Suwanee did and let the citizens decide on recreation with a referendum. He feels that keeping the tax rate instead of raising taxes is the lesser of two evils.

The City Manager asked the Council to let him know if a police department is what they want because it would take some time to get it together and he could have something ready at budget approval time in December. This would be aside from the millage rate but plans would need to begin now for next year.

Council Member C. Thompson motioned to keep the millage rate at 3.8 and have the City Manager work on a one, three and five year plan for a police department. This would include something with a roof over it and cars. It could be an intergovernmental agreement with Gwinnett Sheriff's Department. Council Member Cohen seconded the motion. Approved 5-0.

Motion was made and seconded to adjourn.

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Gary Pirkle, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Jane Whittington, City Clerk