

SEPTEMBER 1, 2015
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 120

PRESENT Mayor Dorothy Hubbard
Mayor Pro Tem Bobby Coleman
City Commissioners: Jon Howard, BJ Fletcher, Roger Marietta, Bob Langstaff,
Jr., and Tommie Postell
City Manager: Sharon Subadan
City Attorney: CN Davis

Mayor Hubbard called the meeting to order at 8:34 am

UPDATES:

Albany Police Chief Michael Persley briefly discussed the nationwide process to hire a new commander for the Drug Unit and said the person should be named soon. Regarding APD, he said he is authorized for 211 sworn officers and 33 civilian positions; currently he has 163 officers and 32 civilians; six of the 48 vacancies have been filled, with officers going through orientation leaving a net vacancy of 38. He reported that the burglary and arson cases that occurred in Ward 1 resulted in the arrest of two individuals. Another incident involved an individual with mental issues who started a grass fire, which subsequently set a vehicle on fire. There was a recent homicide in Ward 6, with the arrest of one subject and the other subject in the hospital. He stated that a current primary concern of Ward 2 is the discovery of a large burglary ring with Wards 1 and 2 sharing a problem of four-wheelers and dirt bikes traveling roads and alleys to reach the sand dunes and the possibility of accidents/fatalities. Regarding Ward 3, he stated that the main concern is that it is densely packed and has a high volume of individual crime. Assaults, such as choking, are now classified as aggravated assault and are felonies. He mentioned a rash of drive-by shootings in the CME area, extending to the upper part of Ward 6, with the Gang Unit making several arrests in those cases. He advised that Wards 4 and 5 have similar issues along with the entering of vehicles. Programs such as Clear Car Campaign resulted in a 12% reduction in entering auto. Last year the City of Albany reported a 25-year low in crime and, APD is committed to maintaining this status.

Gang Unit – Chief Persley discussed gang leadership/memberships, etc., with a focus on the four main gangs. In response to Commissioner Postell, Chief Persley said the Gang Unit is made up of eight individuals; two females and six males. Commissioner Howard expressed concern about weekend responses; Chief Persley advised that the gang unit works weekends and the work schedule is based on crime trends – there is no set schedule. In reply to Commissioner Howard, he stated that they are short by three positions. Commissioner Howard mentioned the level of activity in the city, specifically pockets in Ward 1 and the Albany Homes/Malone area, which may be gang related activities in various apartment areas. Chief Persley addressed the demographic change, adding that the call volume for services is spread out citywide. In response to Commissioner Howard, Chief Persley discussed his efforts to have officers become familiar with residents in their beat. The public often see this as harassment, however, he said he encourages officers to interact with the public. Commissioner Howard said he sees 10-15 sitting in yards and asked if officers can check to see if anything is going on as this raises a red flag. Chief Persley replied that officers respond to reports; however, a group of individuals sitting in

yards is not illegal and does not raise suspicion. Commissioner Howard asked that APD concentrates on the areas he mentioned; it is a hotbed of activity. Mayor Pro Tem Coleman referred to a chase in Ward 2 in which the officer was excessively speeding and eventually crashed. Discussion followed on disrespect of the law, which subsequently creates problems. Chief Persley discussed training and knowing the rule of law/interacting with citizens and there being a shift in the ‘us versus them’ mentality, which is often adopted by officers as well as the public. Mayor Pro Tem Coleman commended Chief Persley for his focus of this issue; Chief Persley advised that the officer was disciplined and was transferred from the Drug Unit.

Commissioner Postell stated that citizens and police officers are human and there is no way of knowing how people will adapt and/or react. He commended Chief Persley’s explanation and said there are six wards within the City of Albany and all are involved in situations. He agreed that the gang task force should be increased and discussed the history of the force, including being downsized. Chief Persley briefly discussed ‘silos’ - criminals having connections to each other, i.e., crime/drugs/gangs and the need for intervention and prevention for those who can be rehabilitated and do not belong in jail.

Commissioner Marietta thanked Chief Persley and APD for their work and mentioned the pay increase, which he hopes will spark interest in the public to join the force.

Mayor Pro Tem Coleman stated that Ward 2 is the largest ward in the city and most diverse.

Chief Persley mentioned flakka, a new street drug in the news, which has not reached Albany, but will in time and briefly commented on marijuana, cocaine and synthetic drugs, etc. He commented on cases involving mental issues/drug abusers and said he cautions his officers that the most dangerous person they will deal with is someone with mental issues abusing drugs. He thanked the Mayor and Commissioners for supporting APD and asked that they continue to express concerns.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE MATTERS

PURCHASES:

Dale Henry, Buyer, discussed information (copy on file) regarding the purchased of trucks. Commissioner Howard moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Postell; the motion unanimously carried.

1. Refuse Trucks, New Way, Scranton, Iowa
Total expenditure \$758,264.24

ITEM(S) FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Commissioner Fletcher said she continues to get calls about the cemetery, with one complaint being serious. She mentioned that the Civic Center is always an issue and asked if a record is kept of people wanting to use the facility, especially if the Civic Center does not get that event; she wants to ensure that quotes and what is offered to the public is in line with other facilities. She recommended tracking the data.

Mayor Pro Tem Coleman asked for an agenda item regarding a quit claim deed re: 2nd Mt. Olive and the City, adding that the Boys and Girls Club sold the facility at 112 Inverness with 2nd Mt. Olive being the buyer. The chain of title has a revisionary clause to the City of Albany and he asked to have an agenda item to remove the interest. The City is not losing any money, but there is a cloud over the deed and the buyers need the deed to be clean.

Commissioner Howard said he would like an agenda item regarding security in this building. Speaking now as a concerned citizen, he said this building is unsafe. He mentioned an irate customer who burst into the Mayor's office last week and was hostile. He suggested having discussion with Mr. Crowdis to increase security in this building for the safety of the public and elected officials. Mayor Hubbard added that there were seven in the meeting and her major concern was the possibility that he [the citizen] had a gun.

Commissioner Postell commented that adverse publicity in the news media is often inaccurate/untrue and information should be corrected. He specifically referred to MEAG funds and how/where they are appropriated.

MANAGER'S UPDATE

EAST ALBANY POOL

Ms. Subadan distributed and discussed information (copy on file) pertaining to the E. Albany pool/splash park, which has been on the SPLOST agenda for years. This item does not require a vote, but is merely the preliminary design and concept. She said the goal is to provide an amenity in the Thornton Park area, between Thornton Gym and the policing center, with a water feature park. Plans include many upgrading the Gym, which will be paid with SPLOST funds.

Commissioner Postell asked if the diagram shows the location of the pool; Ms. Subadan replied in the affirmative. Commissioner Postell asked what will be done at Carver Gym. Ms. Subadan replied that more projects will come before the Commission. Commissioner Postell mentioned the Carver Pool and asked what will be done with the pool as well as Carver Complex. Ms. Subadan explained that this is a SPLOST project specific to E. Albany and she wants to move

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this project forward. Commissioner Postell asked that the records be researched regarding Carver Park and its pool.

Commissioner Howard mentioned the history of the pool/use of SPLOST funds, and lack of a public pool in E. Albany. He asked the dimensions of the pool; Ms. Subadan replied that the designs will include this information. Commissioner Howard asked if \$1.2 million was allocated to each Commissioner. Ms. Subadan replied that it is her understanding it was \$1.0 million.

Mayor Hubbard recognized John Giles from ECG (CEO of Electric Cities of Georgia.)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Hubbard stated that a brief executive session is needed to discuss a personal matter.

At 9:28 p.m., Commissioner Howard moved to enter into executive session, seconded by Commissioner Postell; the motion unanimously carried as follows:

Ward I	yes
Ward II	yes
Ward III	yes
Ward IV	yes
Ward V	yes
Ward VI	yes
Mayor	yes

At 10:30 a.m., Commissioner Marietta moved to exit executive session, seconded by Commissioner Postell, the motion unanimously carried as follows:

Ward I	yes
Ward II	yes
Ward III	yes
Ward IV	yes
Ward V	yes
Ward VI	yes
Mayor	yes

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

SONJA TOLBERT
CITY CLERK