

MONTICELLO CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
August 16, 2021
MINUTES
6:00 P.M.

Members Present – Mayor Bryan Standifer, Mayor Pro Tem Gail Harrell, Councilmembers David Wease, Cynthia Miller, Jennifer Murphy, and Larry Thurman were present.

Staff Present – City Manager Angela Redding, City Clerk Karen Pennamon, and City Attorney Joe Reitman were present.

Electric Cities of Georgia – Chau Nguyen, Director, Analytical Services and Susan Leonard, Principal Analyst of Analytical Services

Media Present – Kathy Mudd - The Monticello News

Called Session – Mayor Bryan Standifer called the meeting to order. The Invocation was given by Attorney Joe Reitman, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. City Clerk Karen Pennamon called the roll.

Agenda Approval – Mayor Standifer requested to remove agenda item #6 – Other Business and item #7 – Executive Session for Personnel, Litigation, or Real Estate. Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Harrell to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Councilmember Murphy. Voting for the motion was unanimous.

5. Concerned Citizens of Monticello – Patricia Finger, a representative from the Concerned Citizens of Monticello stated their organization is seeking to understand how electric rates are set. She noted the City of Monticello has corrected the Winter rates but did not give the 7% sales tax on the rates and they would like for the Council to consider a refund because the rates are taxable. Ms. Finger asked how a mistake with the summer and winter rates happened. City Manager Redding explained that the summer rates are from June through October and the remainder of the months are the winter rates. In the accounting system, it does not automatically change when it is time to change the rates, it is something that is done manually. She noted once the staff person realized the summer rates were still in effect, they notified her, and the Mayor and City Council were also notified. The City sent a letter with the utility bills explaining what happened and refunds were issued. Ms. Finger asked if this was the first time this had happened. Mayor Standifer stated this is the first time that he could recall. Ms. Finger asked if the 2019 residential data had been checked. Sarah Leonard, of the Electric Cities of Georgia, stated that the residential rates for 2019 are correct. Mr. Chau Nguyen, of Electric Cities of Georgia, noted ECG will assist the City of Monticello by sending a reminder when it is time to switch rates. City Manager Redding said a

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reminder has been put on the calendar. Ms. Finger said the current billing system was initiated in 2012 and would like City Council to consider a billing system that does not require manual intervention. City Manager Redding replied she is currently researching different billing systems. Ms. Finger requested that the Council investigate inconsistencies in the customer billings on Greene Street. Ms. Leonard from Electric Cities of Georgia provided an overview on the City of Monticello's electric rates. She noted a cost analysis of the electric, water, and sewer is underway and should be completed in a month or two. Ms. Finger questioned the Power Cost Adjustment change from .0272 per kilowatt-hour to 0.136 cents per kilowatt-hour. Ms. Leonard stated there is a process to electric rate making and the most important one is that the electric rates generate enough revenue to cover your cost. She said she did not agree to set the Power Cost Adjustment to zero. City Manager Redding explained that the Electric Fund funds the General Fund and when they do the transfer, it is from the Electric Fund to the General Fund. Ms. Redding said all the accounts make up the reserve that we need for six months, and it is called the General Fund. Mr. Nguyen noted that there is no cap on the transfer of funds from the General Fund to other departments. Ms. Leonard stated according to the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, the average percentage of sales revenue is 13% and Monticello is average. Attorney Reitman stated the reserve is for a catastrophic weather event, terror attacks, liability, etc. Ms. Leonard noted part of the rate design after they review the rates is to set the Power Cost Adjustment as close to zero as possible. Ms. Finger stated there had not been a rate change since 2012. Councilmember Wease replied that in 2011 several businesses shut down and the Council raised the Power Cost Adjustment to save the City's finances. David Thompson, Historic Preservation Commission Chairman, stated if the electric rates are funding anything besides electric and we adjust it and do not collect that revenue, it means that those services are unfunded. The rates will have to go up, or taxes must go up to cover the cost. He said the money must be funded from someplace even though we may not like that. Ms. Finger asked if there is a low-income qualified senior citizen discount? Mayor Standifer replied no, only for taxes. He said the Cost of Services Study will be the benchmark for the City Council to know which direction to pursue. Ms. Finger asked if the City of Monticello allows solar power. Mayor Standifer stated they do, and they would get this information to her. Stephanie Puckett, a business owner, asked if there are revenue funds to handle infrastructure? Mayor Standifer stated there is money in the budget each year that is earmarked for infrastructure. He said approximately 80% of the water lines have been repaired. Ms. Finger and the Council discussed the City's fifty-year contract and the excess power sales to MEAG. Mayor Standifer stated that the City of Monticello is looking good. There is work to be done but we want to be very strategic when planning for our residents and businesses.

7. Executive Session for Personnel, Litigation, or Real Estate – N/A.

8. Comments by the Governing Body

Mayor Standifer thanked the ECG representatives and the Concerned Citizens of Monticello participating in the discussion of the City of Monticello's electric rates.

Mayor Pro Tem Harrell had no comment.

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Councilmember Wease thanked Electric Cities of Georgia for explaining the electric rates.

Councilmember Miller had no comment.

Councilmember Murphy had no comment.

Councilmember Thurman had no comment.

9. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

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