



City of Fairburn  
Mayor and Council Special Called Meeting  
Minutes  
August 2, 2022  
5:30 pm

- I. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm by Honorable Mayor Mario Avery.
- II. Roll call by Brenda James, City Clerk, found the following members present:

The Honorable Mayor Mario Avery

The Honorable James Whitmore  
The Honorable Alex Heath  
The Honorable Linda J. Davis

The Honorable Pat Pallend  
Mayor Pro Tem Hattie Portis-Jones (Zoom)

The Honorable Ulysses J. Smallwood-Absent

Also present was City Administrator, Tony Phillips, City Clerk, Brenda James, Attorney, Rory Starkey and Attorney, Serena Nowell.

- III. Adoption of the Agenda:

Councilman Whitmore made a motion to approve the agenda as submitted, with the second provided by Councilwoman Davis. **The motion carried unanimously.**

- IV. Agenda Items/Public Hearings:

1. **Agreement with Charles Abbott Associates for Building Department Services**

Brian Epstein of Charles Abbott Associates, Inc., gave a presentation and stated they have been in business since 1984. They have over twenty-five community partners in Georgia, fourteen building officials, thirty code inspectors, two engineers and other staff members. The equipment they have is owned and maintained by CAA and offer next day inspections. Revenue-sharing ensures City costs will never exceed permit revenue. CAA is requesting that the city adopt a fee schedule that is both an industry standard and inflation proof. The fee schedule is based on construction costs using nationally accepted data.

City Administrator, Tony Phillips stated the City of Fairburn has continued to see an increase in development throughout the city regarding residential and commercial projects. Over the past several years, the city has operated with one employee serving as the building official and inspector which, does not meet the current demand of development and the building permit fee schedule has not been updated since 2003.

Council Member Heath made a motion to approve the agreement with Charles Abbott Associates, Inc. for the Building Department Services and to approve the revised building permit fee

schedule. The second was provided by Mayor Pro Tem Portis-Jones.

Mayor Pro Tem Portis-Jones asked Mr. Epstein to explain the plan review component and to explain why this is important. She also asked if they would be housed in Fairburn and asked about minimum staffing.

Mr. Epstein stated when they have a residential plan review, we assess and evaluate any deficiencies and identify common problems and square footage issues. They try to identify any major issues that we may have upfront on the drawing plans and verifies the square footage is correct. Mr. Epstein stated they work out of city hall or remotely, we will have an inspector here as well as inspectors out in the field. Mr. Epstein will be the project manager for the City of Fairburn.

Councilman Davis asked Mr. Epstein to share any challenges their company has had during the current environment on delivering services. Mr. Epstein stated they have not had any challenges, it has been seamless for them because they are accustomed to working remotely.

Councilwoman Davis advised Mr. Phillips that this is a significant impact on our fees and asked how will we market these changes. Mr. Phillips stated these fees will impact the construction companies that apply for a building permit, at that time, all the information will be readily available to them, these fees will also be on the website.

Councilman Whitmore asked Mr. Phillips about the 60/40% revenue sharing. Mr. Phillips stated that Charles Abbot Associates would get 60% and the City would get 40%, and this ensures the City's costs would not exceed our permitting fees. Councilman Whitmore stated the proposed building permit fee schedule will put the city in a better position, our fees were low, and all the contractors knew it. He asked about the online application and Mr. Phillips stated they are working on that as well. Mayor Avery stated because of a cyber-attack on January 9<sup>th</sup>, as it relates to the upgrade, we are prioritizing cyber security issues that had to be addressed because of information that has been lost, but we are working on the upgrade in technology.

Mayor Pro Tem Portis-Jones asked if CAA will be assisting in documenting, making suggestions and recommendations regarding operations. Mr. Phillips stated yes, and one of the reasons they chose Charles Abbott is because of the depth of their experience.

Mayor Avery stated the motion has been made and properly seconded. **The motion carried unanimously.**

## **2. Resolution Authorizing the Establishment of a COVID-19 Pandemic Leave Policy**

Human Resources Director, Talisha Champagne stated there were two parts of the COVID-19 Policy. The policy was established to develop safety protocols and guidelines due to the surge of COVID cases, not only within the County but within our employee population. We added another component which was to establish a pandemic leave benefit for our employees to incentivize those employees who are currently vaccinated, so they would not have to utilize their own sick time or those who do not have enough sick time.

Councilman Pallend made a motion to approve the Resolution and approve the COVID-19 Policy and Pandemic Leave Benefit and the second was provided by Councilwoman Davis.



Mayor Pro Tem Portis-Jones asked if Ms. Champagne could investigate a broader policy to include other pandemics or epidemics as they occur.

Mayor Avery stated the motion has been made and properly seconded. **The motion carried unanimously.**

### 3. Introduction to Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG)

Stuart Jones, Senior Regional Manager with MEAG gave a presentation. He stated Municipal Electric Systems date back to the 1890s which most of the systems provided wholesale power from a small plant that they owned and operated. Most of that early service was for electric trolleys which eventually led to street lighting. Until MEAG was formed, Fairburn was a wholesale customer of Georgia Power. Georgia Power indicated in the early 1970s that in the event of power shortages, it would provide first for its retail load and could not be responsible for supplying the wholesale requirements of the municipal systems. At the same time, Georgia Power was seeking an operating license for Hatch Unit 2 and construction license for Vogtle Units 1 & 2. The Atomic Energy Act was being amended to require an anti-trust review by the Department of Justice. Under the settlement agreement from the anti-trust review, Georgia Power agreed to sell to the municipalities and to the EMCs appropriate shares of its facilities. As a result, the General Assembly created MEAG, a public corporation and instrumentality of the State, for the purpose of acquiring generation and transmission assets to provide wholesale power supply to the municipalities. MEAG's initial acquisitions in four power plants were financed and the sales were completed in early 1977. To date, there are forty-eight municipal systems and one county that make up MEAG Power and service a population of 634,000 for all forty-nine cities.

MEAG's mission is to provide our participants with competitive and reliable electric power to enhance the quality of life in their communities. Our vision is to be our participants' #1 choice for wholesale power that is essential to their growth and prosperity. Our values are customer focus, integrity, excellence, teamwork, stewardship, and responsiveness.

Councilmember Heath asked what would happen to the coal fired plants, once the coal supply in the U.S. is depleted. Mr. Jones stated that Plant Wansley will be non-operational at the end of this month. The two units there will no longer be in the fleet, that decision was based on the need to add additional environmental controls. The eastern coal is a higher sulfur coal out of central Illinois and Plant Scherer located north of Macon will be closing units three and four. The co-owners of units one and two in Plant Scherer which is MEAG, Georgia Power, and Oglethorpe are evaluating to see if they want to keep Plant Scherer going and that decision needs to be made by 2025.

Councilman Heath asked if those facilities would be revitalized to run natural gas. Steve Jackson, Chief Operating Officer with MEAG stated when you look at shutting a coal plant, it will be demolished. Those sites would be a suitable location for other generating resources because you have transmission infrastructure and other infrastructure that can be used.

Mr. Jones discussed the comparison of emission-free, MEAG is 66% emissions-free whereas Georgia is at 34.3% and US is at 37.7%. Mr. Stuart Jones said in 2020, MEAG Power adopted a new Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), a new roadmap to meet the future capacity and energy requirements of its forty-nine public power participant communities. Our vision is to continue to

transition our resource portfolio to address future requirements, including increasing our emissions-free energy delivered to nearly 90% by 2045.

Mayor Pro Tem Portis-Jones thanked Mr. Jones for his presentation and asked for more information on the integrated plan to become greener. Mr. Steve Jackson stated as we look at the future, 25 years and try and determine what resources may be needed for the system as other units go out of service. What we see primarily is adding solar resources to the system, which will reduce costs and will be added over time. Mayor Pro Tem Portis-Jones asked if there were any grant opportunities through MEAG and Mr. Jackson stated they are trying to have a consultant to help look at potential grant opportunities in the infrastructure act for our participants.

Councilman Heath asked if there will be a rate increase once Vogtle units three and four go online. Mr. Jackson stated, yes there will be rate increases, we provide 10-year projections so you can understand what those impacts are.


Councilman Whitmore inquired about MEAG's policy for customers that want to put up solar at their residence. It was his understanding that a customer inquired about this, and they would be paying more out in surcharges etc. Mr. Jackson stated that we are operating at the transmission and generation level and when we look at solar resources, we are looking at large utility scale resources like the 80-megawatt project. When you look at a residential installation of solar facilities, those policies are set by you as the retail provider, so depending on what your policies are, this is managed at the city level. There are certain state requirements that the city falls under as far as what amount of solar energy they are required to take, but this is managed at the local level.

Mayor Avery stated there has been problematic issues with solar and will have more conversation about this later.

Councilman Whitmore stated that we lost a Police Officer in the City of Fairburn. One of our business owners, the Studio Cigar Lounge will be honoring the life of our dear officer on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 6 p.m. They are offering for the officers to come in and dine at the studio as well as Mayor and Council.

V. Adjournment:

Mayor Pro Tem Portis-Jones made a motion to adjourn the meeting with Councilman Heath providing the second. The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m. **The motion carried unanimously.**

  
Brenda B. James, City Clerk

  
Mario Avery, Mayor