

**City of Walnut Grove**  
**Public Hearing**  
**Thursday, May 9, 2019**  
**6:30 p.m.**

Present:  
Mayor Lamar Lee  
Carol Witcher  
Linda Pilgrim  
Mark Moore  
Kevin Schultz

- I. **CALL TO ORDER**  
Meeting called to order by Mayor Lamar Lee
  
- II. **INVOCATION**  
Invocation given by Carol Witcher
  
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**  
All stood for Pledge of Allegiance
  
- IV. **AGENDA APPROVAL:**  
**Councilman Kevin Schultz** - ask to amend the agenda to move New Business, to section VII Public Works. **Mark More**- seconded that motion, motion passed.
  
- V. **PUBLIC COMMENT: Nancy Condon- Walnut Grove Library-** We just wanted to come before you today and talk to you about our funding request that you have got there before you. I wanted to brag a little bit. Since we started in February and you where very generous and gave us a \$5000.00 increase for this year. And at that same time we were able to open back up with extended hours we are now open 44 hours a week and we are open 7 days a week. In February our patriotism was 1765, in March it was 2093 and in April we had a tremendous jump to 3890. Just because we have had these extended hours and we are very thankful and appreciative for the increase. Dana had told me today that they have had people coming in and saying we did not realize that you were here and are transferring their patriotism from their library to Walnut

Grove library. We did ask for an increase this year to continue that good work just so we can get some additional funding for more hours and more books.

**Dana Seger-** We would really appreciate it with that increase in patrons they are coming to us looking for new material and you know programming and things like that. I was able to raise almost \$2600.00 in the last month for our summer reading program. We will have a lot of great events and crafts and all kind of materials to give out. Every child that reads 10 books will get a free book that I was able to have donated for every child in the community as well as additional prizes. Lots of people are coming and we want to be able to compete with the other library's around so we can keep the patrons coming. **Nancy Condon-** Does anyone have any questions for us? We did include in the packet a quick look and this is for fiscal year 2018 and we will be doing our quick look for fiscal year 2019 in July, August as that fiscal year ends. I really feel you know we had 24, 880 visits this fiscal year 2018 and I feel we will be on target to make that same or even a little bit more with being open on Sunday and Monday. **Councilwoman Carol Witcher-** I do have a question on the first paragraph where you state to restore services and resources, what services have been diminished or removed because of the money situation? **Nancy**

**Condon -** Well one thing we are hoping to offer is a more robust e- books program and downloadable audio. Those cost are very expensive for library's the Georgia GAD has switched from overdrive to recorded books and its cost is a lot less but, it is still \$2000.00 to \$2500.00 a year for us to be a part of that. We have a service right now which is Freading and Fregal which is a lot less expensive but does not have half of the best sellers and it doesn't have any downloadable audio and a lot of commuters want that audio and new cars do not have CD players anymore so our patrons are used to listen to CD's on the way to work and they can't do that anymore. They have their MP or their telephone but they can't plug in their CD. **Dana**

**Seger-** In Gwinnett County and other surrounding county's already have this in place so the patrons are using them to get these resources. **Carol Witcher-** I also want to know do you have any brail **Nancy Condon-** We do not, we do work with GLASS Georgia Library for accessible statewide services. We have application with GLASS and we encourage our patrons both vision and hearing impaired to sign up with them and we do partnership with them. And in our Morgan library we do have 4 or 5 copies and we do have a low vision group that meets once a month. **Dana Seger-** We do have at our library we have 2 magnifying materials that they can check out for 2 weeks at a time and I can order brail I have done that several times since February. **Councilwoman Carol Witcher-** I also have another question about the last sentence in the first paragraph, we must also cover an increase in retirement benefits for the full time Walnut Grove library manager is that State mandated or? **Nancy Condon-** Yes that is the teacher retirement system and the TRS is going from 20.4 percent to 21.14 percent for the fiscal 2020 year and we have no control over this TRS just tells us this is what we are going to collect from you. And it is gone up over the years when I started the employer contribution was 13 to 14 percent then there was a big jump to 15 and then to 16, and last year we had a big jump to 18 this was actually a smaller jump this year. **Councilwoman Carol Witcher-** How much if any does the state contribute to your retirement? **Nancy Condon-** They do not contribute anything TRS contributes and then we pay 6 percent to the employee retirement system. **Councilman Mark**

**Moore-** Does your increase patronage affect the income you get from other resources? **Dana**

**Seger-** Yes and no. Some of the money comes in for lost and damaged materials I have to send the money back as it is requested to the libraries from which it comes from. And there has been an increase but, it is too early for me to soon for me to tell what we will be able to keep from the increase that we have seen. We have projected if you will look at the last page for the financial report for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter we have projected a \$9000.00 in fees and fines coming into the library and we have collected about \$7000.00 so we are about at 83 percent. We get a lot in the summer with kids coming in and checking out books and they lose them or have to pay overdue fines. And then we get a little rash at Christmas time so. **Councilwoman Carol Witcher-** Have you received any Memoriam from someone's passing that they have left the library. **Nancy Condon-** No we haven't our Morgan county has had two in the last 5 years. **Councilwoman Carol Witcher-** Is there anything in your literature no I believe there used to be. **Councilwoman Carol Witcher-** May I suggest that you make a little note and add that in because if people don't know they won't give. **Councilman Kevin Schultz-** I just have one question I know that the Walton County Board of Commissioners contributes as well, has there been a request for an increase from them and is so how much. **Nancy Condon-** We have ask for a \$3000.00 increase per library. But we split their amount between the 4 libraries. So the amount here is our library and we have ask for another \$3000.00 for each of our libraries now we want know until the middle of June. In the last two years we have not gotten anything from the county. **Councilwoman Carol Witcher-** Is there any reason why you don't get something from the county. **Nancy Condon-** They would request every year for us not to submit a request for an increase but, we ask, you have to ask, if you don't ask you don't get anything. So last year they had enough money to give us an increase. We ask we don't just set back and not ask and say ok. **Councilman Kevin Schultz-** So their amount which is 82,000 would increase to around 85,000. **Nancy Condon-** Yes. **Councilwoman Linda Pilgrim-** Do you have at the library a fund raiser person on staff. **Dana Seger-** No, we have one person that is a friend of the library and she sponsored that and almost 300 people came to the petting zoo and they only charged a minimum of \$200.00 that day for everything that they brought that day. She was more than happy to cover that, I meet with people and try to find sponsors for events and we don't have a group or a fund raising person and that person who goes out is me and that is where that \$2600.00 came from. **Nancy Condon-** And if you look down on the third quarter financial report again if you see line # 37 materials from donors. We did secure an \$8000.00 grant from Walton EMC so we won't have that next year. That was a great grant. And we are looking at the Dollar General youth literacy grant and we want know the outcome of that until May 27<sup>th</sup> and that will be split with 4 libraries. And I will say that it has really helped having the friends of the library and we got the grant from Wal-Mart a few years ago and we have been able to get through the friends of the library for having the 50123 and really helped us to get the grants that we have. **Dana Seger-** Does anyone have anymore comments? **Mayor Lee-** Thank you for coming out.

**Maxine McClanahan-** 4081 Habersham Circle, Walnut Grove- I have now been attending council meetings for more than 10 years so I take a strong interest as what you do and how you do it.

In the last few years I have taken a much more active part as a resident to sometimes remind council of their roll in the city sometimes privately and sometimes in this this form. Last year I made a comment to council and I quote that comment” for years I have watched as Walnut Grove city council makes decisions that when pushed they resend or modify, if council is not taking the time to make sound decisions then it is time that they start, on the other hand if they feel that their decision was sound they need to be willing to defend that decision.” You really didn’t do that this year and it has been costly to our city. I wish to remind you that when you make mid-year budget adjustments that it is more than just a budget adjustment it cost the city. For time spent for legal council , legal research for meeting for additional staff time and it costly to the city and I just want to remind you of that. In May of 2018 there was discussion for more funding for the library and the vote was Not to increase their funding for 2018/2019. In December, this topic was addressed once again and again. You spent time at meetings before giving an additional \$5000.00 to the library. This computes to spending more money for legal counsel, more expense on published notices with the newspaper, more time for employees to be at those meetings, preparing the paperwork, assuring everything was accurate and legal. So that \$5000.00 to the library actually cost the city more than it should have. Listening better to earlier And after the meeting arguments and doing proper research may have resolved this topic last June. The thousands spent to “change your mind” could have been avoided.

I do not at this time want to hear your “excuses” for why you did what you did or did not do so last year. I have heard from them. In my opinion, they are not valid. I want you to VOTE SMARTER this year. You still have time to do your research properly for this year’s budget. The final vote will not take place until next month. You still have time to have discussions with the public, with staff, with experts on things you don’t know or understand. Forget what you want to see. Do what is Smart and Right for our city, which may or may not be a popular vote. You are not there to make friends or run a campaign. You are there to make the hard informed decisions with that being said, I want to address two areas that have been on the minds of council for the entire year,

**THE LIBRARY-** I personally would like to see you increase that line item up to at least \$55,000 and NOT entertain later changes. I have done my research weeks’ worth and just in case you have not done research but have picked some random number, let me give you these tidbits of my research. We being the city pay about \$36,000 a year for the mortgage on the building. We pay about \$3,400.00 annually in the building insurance. We provide the majority of the maintenance for the building and supplies associated with same. We currently pay a \$50,000 “use as you please” payment to the library. This computes to over \$90,000 in benefits. Our budget for this past year was \$677, 780. This support computes to an amount equal to about 13% of our total budget. In checking with numerous other cities of our size, most our size do not even have or support a library. Larger cities (ranging in our population from \$1,500 to 12,000 come in at an average of about 10%. Based on this years’ budget, 55,000 would put us at about 11.5% 60,000 at 13%.

**Education, Conference and other training.**

There has been a lot of discussion in regards to who receives training, who should attend training, who should attend conference and what limits should be placed there. It is my feeling that restricting access to education OR to conference is not the right answer. This is an election year and we have the potential to have up to 4 brand new people on board. It is not the role of council to micro manage how the budgetary item is spent. That should be the role of the Mayor. If any person who sits on council or is on staff with the city feel there are classes being provided that would benefit our city with knowledge they will obtain, then I say as long as there is budget money then let the Mayor decide for the city at that time. If at anytime, ANYONE else, feels there is an abuse of this privilege then there are proper procedures to address this. I for one want my council and staff to be informed and educated to provide the best answer for us. When we restrict that we limit our city. As for Conference, I do not feel there should be restrictions placed on going based solely on taking class. It was said that by people taking classes here we "save the city money". According to my research this is not necessarily true. I am aware of what takes place at conference. I want the public to also understand that there are many benefits to our leaders/staff even if they don't take a class. There is networking with Mayors, Council and staff from other cities, hundreds of them. There is the opportunity to sit in on "rapid fire" sessions which are one or two interactive meetings that inform about many, many issues cities face. There are official meetings that deal with important decisions both locally and statewide. There is opportunity to interact with many vendors to learn about what they offer our cities. There are speakers that bring wonderful and fun messages. My experience has been that if our leaders take part in these there is little, if anytime available to visit Tybee Island, go shopping, sightseeing, etc. Yes there is also the opportunity to take classes while there, but what if they are full or not enough available to a person that has taken several classes. Space and class selection is actually much more limited at conference that may seem apparent looking at the registration forms. Should we restrict our leaders from even going because of the amount of classes for which they register? If a person does not take advantage of all of these opportunities, Then perhaps yes, but I think that needs to be a decision made based on the actions of each Individual and handled independently. Do not penalize those that use this conference to the best advantage of the city. I heard it said we should restrict the budget to a "per person" scenario. This would mean you must have enough available in each "council" and/or staff account to provide for people currently in those positions and tying up funds for the possibility of "new people". Doesn't it make more sense to have a total budget that is distributed fairly as needed. In light of what I see for this years' proposed budget (the revised copy), I feel that this is overall a very good budget and very reasonable. The primary space that I see that would give access to increasing funds to another category (such as library) would be pulled from line item 52.400, Streets, Sidewalks, as SPLOST money could be made available for much of this. Again I remind you. DO YOUR HOMEWORK BEFORE that last day. Do not try and do it on June 12 or Or you will not have all the information you need to make good decisions. I remind you, once You vote in your budget, make every effort to work within that budget rather than having to Make changes that are costly. Do not change your minds based on the comments of others, But based on your knowledge, you research and the practically of same.

**Councilman Kevin Schultz-** Made a motion to adjourn. **Councilwoman Carol Witcher-** Seconded  
That motion, Motion Passed.

Adjourned 6:48 p.m.

Approved by the Mayor and Council this 13 day of June 2019.

Mayor Lamar Lee *Lamar Lee* Clerk Katherine Glass *Katherine A Glass*