

City of Coolidge  
Workshop  
Official Minutes

June 6, 2023  
5:30 P.M.

Councilmember Leger was not able to attend the Workshop in person but was able to be part of the Workshop via telephone on Councilmember Melissa Johnson's personal cell phone.

Call to Order

The Workshop was called to order by Mayor Diane H. Causey.

MEDIACOM PRESENTATION:

Mayor Causey welcomed Mr. Darryl Chaney and Mr. Mitchell Brown from Mediacom. These two gentlemen came to speak to Council and make a presentation regarding a proposal to bring high-speed internet to the City of Coolidge for customers who are currently underserved or have no service at all. The gentlemen provided a packet of information to Council which included the addresses in Coolidge who are currently underserved as far as internet accessibility (estimated to be around 33 addresses). The list of underserved addresses is provided to them by the Georgia Database List. Mediacom has received a Grant to complete the project for the underserved addresses listed in Coolidge.

Mediacom already works with Thomas County and has been granted Right-of-Way access in Thomas County. They have never done business in the City of Coolidge, so their request is for the City of Coolidge to grant them Right-of-Way access in the City limits of Coolidge to build their network. Mr. Chaney stated they currently work with all local utility providers and use their utility poles, as they approve, to connect their services, either above ground or below ground depending on how it is constructed. They will also work with the City of Coolidge to locate Water/Sewer lines to ensure no damage occurs to any of our infrastructure.

Mr. Chaney stated Mediacom is requesting to have Right-of-Way access approved by the City. They will then build the network starting in Thomasville and work their way North. He stated this will be a three-year project. He explained that, to start, the project will only be providing service to the addresses provided as being underserved, but while in the process of doing so, they would like to go ahead and build the network to eventually be able to bring service to all of Coolidge should residents decide they would like to have service with Mediacom. He also stated eventually Mediacom would like to be able to offer cable television services as well as telephone service.

City Manager, Don Cole asked how the amount of the Right-of-Way fee was decided upon. Mr. Brown stated it is a standard fee in a Right-of-Way agreement provided by their legal team. Mr. Chaney said that the Right-of-Way agreement is only for internet services and has nothing to do with television. He stated that, before the television service is launched, they will have to come back to the governing body and request Franchise and when they come to request Franchise, that would be the first step in giving an estimate of when television would be available. Once it is available, the City would then start to be able to receive Franchise fees for television, which would be 4- to 5% of the television revenues the consumer pays to Mediacom that is paid back to the City. Mr. Cole stated that it is his understanding communities can also levy a Franchise fee on internet services. Mr. Chaney said

Mediacom does not pay a Franchise fee on internet services. He said, in general, internet has been governed as a non-Franchise fee because of the growth of what the government thinks the product can increase to, they did not want to restrict it, so Mediacom's legal team has said no, there are no Franchise fees from Mediacom for this internet product. Mr. Chaney stated if there are any specifics of where that information came from, we can share that information with them and they will take it to their legal team.

Mr. Chaney and Mr. Brown answered questions from Council before ending their presentation. They also offered to come and speak at a Workshop in the future on some of the specific services they offer to residents if Council would like them to make another presentation.

Mayor Causey thanked them both for coming and presenting the information and request to Council and told them Council will discuss further and make a decision in the near future.

Mr. Brown asked if the application and permit for Right-of-Way access needs to be provided before Council makes a vote. Mayor Causey stated that it would be good to have the completed application and permit given to the City Clerk so that we can have the presentation of plans/plats before a decision is made by Council.

Mr. Cole stated the City Attorney sent a copy of our Utility Accommodation Policy to Mediacom. He asked if there was any conflict with that Policy and what they are requesting. Mr. Chaney stated they do have their legal team, as well as their construction team, looking at that and will be able to answer that question after review.

Mr. Cole told Mr. Chaney and Mr. Brown that Council will probably not vote on this subject until a later Council meeting.

Council again expressed appreciation to Mr. Chaney and Mr. Brown for coming and thanked them for the information provided.

#### DISCUSS QUOTE FROM SMITH ELECTRIC:

Council discussed repair issues with one of our City Wells and the quote from Smith Electric for the specific repairs to be done. Mayor Causey stated it is imperative that Council come to a consensus and get this repair done. Councilmember Melissa Johnson asked if this could be paid for by SPLOST. Mayor Causey and Mr. Cole both stated that this will have to be a question for City Attorney, Tommy Coleman to answer.

At this time, Councilmember Melissa Johnson went off-topic and wanted to discuss City Attorney, Tommy Coleman. She blatantly stated that Mr. Coleman does not represent the City of Coolidge. She said Mr. Coleman is the attorney to be appointed by the City Council and he has not been appointed by this Council as of January 2023. Mayor Causey spoke up and said she does not believe the City Attorney has to be appointed. Councilmember Melissa Johnson stated, "The Charter states different.". Councilmember Melissa Johnson stated that it bothers her that Mr. Coleman's first sentence on an email was, "I represent the City of Coolidge, Georgia". She said Mr. Coleman "has made that statement to several other people as well, and not just in document form but by voice, telling people that he runs the City". This topic has been brought up multiple times by Councilmember Melissa Johnson about Mr. Coleman. She further stated, "As far as I'm concerned, and this in my opinion, so let me just say that, my opinion, Tommy Coleman don't represent this

City Council and he does not represent the City of Coolidge. Tommy Coleman, Diane (Mayor Causey), has represented you all these years, sitting right beside you where Mr. Cole is now sitting, and, as far as I'm concerned, he is not our City Attorney because he has not been appointed by this Council." Councilmember Melissa Johnson stated she would like it to be added to the Agenda at the next Council meeting to discuss the City Attorney and added, "and we are also going to have others come and make proposals to be our City Attorney". She stated, "We're going to do it just like we did the Judge and just like we did Mr. Cole, because this Council is working, we are not dumb and we know how to look up things and do things, we're not the average Council that was sat here for decades."

After some discussion by Councilmember Braswell about his stance on certain things and his willingness to work with Council, City Administration, and staff, Mayor Causey brought the Workshop back to the topic on the Agenda, which was the Smith Electric quote. She stated we need a consensus from Council to move forward with the repairs so that we can tell Smith Electric to go ahead and get parts ordered, etc. and get the Well fixed and Council can ratify this at the next meeting. Council consensus was in agreement.

At this time, Mr. Cole stated he needs for Council go into Executive Session for Personnel and asked the public to please exit the Workshop.

#### **Executive Session: Personnel**

##### **Motion to Enter Executive Session:**

Motion-M. Johnson; Second-Braswell; Leger-aye; Mayor Causey-aye  
Unanimously approved.

O.C.G.A. § 50-14-4(b) provides as follows:

When any meeting of an agency is closed to the public pursuant to subsection (a) of this Code section, the person presiding over such meeting or, if the agency's policy so provides, each member of the governing body of the agency attending such meeting, shall execute and file with the official minutes of the meeting a notarized affidavit stating under oath that the subject matter of the meeting, or the closed portion thereof, was devoted to matters within the exception by law and identifying the specific relevant exception.

The subject matter of said meeting, or the closed portion thereof, was devoted to matters within exceptions to public disclosure provided by law. Those specific relevant exceptions are identified as follows. The only matter(s) considered or discussed during the closed portion or executive session of the meeting is/are:

(F.) Meeting to discuss or deliberate upon the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of a public officer or employee as provided in Georgia Code section 50-14-3(b)(2).

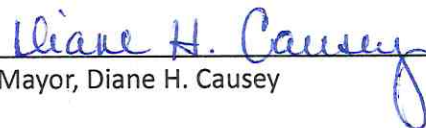
Council addressed and discussed the relevant subject matter.

##### **Motion to Exit Executive Session:**

Motion-M. Johnson; Second-Braswell; Leger-aye; Mayor Causey-aye  
Unanimously approved.

#### **Adjourn**

Workshop adjourned.

  
Mayor, Diane H. Causey

  
Asst. City Clerk, Stephanie Mock

**Present**

Councilmember Braswell  
Councilmember M. Johnson  
Councilmember Leger (via Councilmember M. Johnson's cell phone)

**Absent**

Councilmember Gilligan