

City of Coolidge
Workshop – New Charter
Official Minutes

February 9, 2021
5:30 P.M.

The Workshop was called to order by Mayor, Diane H. Causey at 5:30 P.M.

City Attorney, Tommy Coleman was present at the Workshop to review and discuss the proposed New Charter for the City of Coolidge, which would change the current governmental structure of a strong Mayor/weak Council to one of a strong Council/weak Mayor and a City Manager.

Mr. Coleman drafted a new City Charter with these changes for Council to review and approve going forth through the proper channels.

He discussed the legal process for creating and adopting a new City Charter. The first step in the process is for Council to adopt a Resolution requesting the Georgia General Assembly to introduce legislation for the adoption of a new Charter for the City of Coolidge. The Resolution request and proposed new Charter must first be sent to the General Assembly, your local delegation of state legislators. It is a local Act and usually, as a courtesy, they will all vote for the local Act. They will then draft a Bill and send it back to us for review and editing. There must be a Public Notification advertised in the paper for the public to have an opportunity to view the proposed new Charter. The Bill is then sent back to the General Assembly to be introduced and put before the Legislative Council for a vote. Once approved, the new Charter is sent back to us.

Mr. Coleman stated there will not be much change compared to the existing Charter. He reviewed and discussed the new proposed Charter at length, elaborating on the following subjects:

1. The residency requirement for elected officials.
2. Elected officials being prohibited from holding other offices when financially interested.
3. Special meetings may be called by the Mayor or by three Council Members.
4. A Quorum consists of the Mayor plus three Council Members or of four Council Members.
There is an Emergency Ordinance which would require fewer members for a Quorum in the case of an emergency where all Council Members could not be present, and this Ordinance would be in effect for only 30 days.
5. The current duties and powers of the Mayor and the duties and powers of the Mayor under the new Charter. The Mayor will have the power to Veto under the new Charter.
6. Mayor Pro Temp, already in place.
7. The appointment, qualifications, and compensation of the City Manager to be decided by the City Council, not the Mayor.
8. The duties and powers of the City Manager.
9. Removal of the City Manager.

10. Except for the purpose of inquiries and investigations, City Council or its Members shall deal with City Officials and employees who are subject to the direction and supervision of the City Manager solely through the City Manager, and neither Council nor its Members shall give orders to any such Officer or employee either publicly or private.
11. Elections.
12. Removal of Elected Officials.
13. General operations of City Government.

Council Member Keown had a question for Mr. Coleman. She asked, in the event the new Charter is approved and adopted and we have not hired a City Manager yet, will the Mayor continue to perform the administrative duties assigned to the City Manager in the interim? Mr. Coleman's answer was yes, this situation happens in a lot of cities, and the Mayor takes over until a City Manager is appointed.

Mayor Causey asked if we could submit the new Charter with the effective date set for the beginning of next year to give time to fill the position. Mr. Coleman said yes, we could do that and make the effective date January 1, 2022. Council was in agreement.

Council Member Blaha voiced a concern about Coolidge being such a small town, do we have the tax base to support the cost of having a City Manager?

Council discussed trying to find a part-time City Manager instead of a full-time City Manager. Mayor Causey stated that, having done this for so many years, she knows that situations and things come up unexpectedly all the time and her concern is that a part-time City Manager may not be able to do the job as efficiently as you would want them to do. Council had discussion and agreed that with the use of technology today, someone would be able to handle certain things remotely and not have to be present in the office and that they would like to still try to find a part-time City Manager.

Council Member Yarbrough asked about the interview process of hiring a City Manager, whether it would be held as a meeting by Council or if a few members would conduct the interview process. Mr. Coleman stated that it should be done as a meeting in Executive Session, where Council would interview one or more applicants, discuss in Executive Session the decision of who to hire, and then come out of Executive Session to vote.

Council will vote on the Resolution requesting the Georgia General Assembly to introduce legislation for the adoption of a new Charter for the City of Coolidge at the Council Meeting following the Workshop.

Council discussed the new City Website.

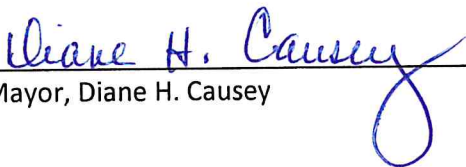
Council reviewed and discussed the Agenda for the Council Meeting.

Under "New Business" on the Agenda, Mayor Causey wanted to discuss the City Lots. There are five lots owned by the City. It has been suggested by Council Member Keown to declare these lots as surplus and sell them. Council has been provided with all information as well as photos of these lots in their Council folders for the Meeting.

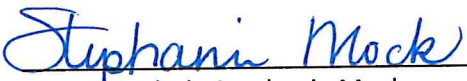
Asst. City Clerk and Court Clerk, Stephanie Mock wanted to discuss a request concerning the City website. There is a tab on the website titled "Citation Concerns" where people can ask questions concerning their citations and it says questions will be answered within 48 hours. Mrs. Mock requested this to be taken off of the website due to the fact she is already answering phone calls of people with questions, and she cannot commit to the time constraints of having to keep a check on the website and making sure all questions are answered within 48 hours. Council agreed that it would not be a problem to remove it from the website.

Council Member Keown suggested adding a downloadable Police Department/City Employee application for employment to the website.

Workshop adjourned at 6:30 P.M.



Mayor, Diane H. Causey



Asst. City Clerk, Stephanie Mock

PRESENT

Council Member Blaha
Council Member Gilligan
Council Member Johnson
Council Member Yarbrough
Council Member Smith
Council Member Keown
City Attorney, Tommy Coleman

ABSENT