

**OCTOBER 3, 2012  
COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
MARIMAC LAKES  
WATER/SEWER RATE STUDY  
CHARTER DISCUSSION  
12:00 PM**

**VISITORS PRESENT: Ben Turnipseed, Andrew Whalen, Don Rehman and Ben Nelms**

**FULL COUNCIL PRESENT**

**1. CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME VISITORS**

Mayor Belisle declared this to be an open meeting duly convened under the Open Meetings Law after receiving confirmation from the City Clerk that all legal requirements have been met. The meeting was then called to order and Mayor Belisle welcomed those present.

**2. WATER/SEWER RATE STUDY-G. Ben Turnipseed**

After completion of the sewer rate study, Mr. Turnipseed presented his findings to include the current cost of water and sewer service compared to revenues and expenditures of the systems. The City's present loss or unaccounted for water is at 10.25% which when explained was good to be below 15%. C. Owens asked for a definition of "unaccounted for" and was told that this could include flushing hydrants, usage from government buildings (no charge) and leaks. Mr. Turnipseed added that there was a shortfall of revenues in the amount of \$48,650 which was made up from our CRF and miscellaneous revenues and suggested in the future that all revenues from CRF are not used towards expenses but are placed in a reserve account. After compiling data from the past 12 months revenue projections for 2013 are listed, based on the average usage per month from residential, commercial and industrial and the reasons for possible rate adjustments. A tiered structure for the water system was discussed however no structure currently exists for sewer. The proposed rate increases were then reviewed. Referring to the industrial increase Mayor Belisle asked that we be very careful "not to hit our biggest customers" with a huge increase. C. Fisher asked how much of a reduction regarding our large customers & was told by Mayor Belisle he's not sure at present but wants to remain competitive for future industry. Mayor Belisle would like rate review to become an annual process and would like to construct a 3-year plan that will get the City where we can refinance, eventually combining the systems as at present, we don't have that flexibility. Mr. Turnipseed then reviewed our current rates compared to those of Coweta Water Authority. General consensus is Mr. Turnipseed will redo the proposed rate structure to cover operating costs and current debt only and will keep the industrial rates below the County rates. Mr. Turnipseed stated that he will offer 2 options; a tiered rate structure as well as one that will be competitive

with the surrounding area. All agreed that the future goal is that the systems will be combined and by the construction of ordinance, the utility rate structure will be an annual review.

### 3. **CHARTER DISCUSSION**

Drew Whalen began by presenting the proposed draft Charter that will provide uniformity with other jurisdictions. The organization chart was reviewed which specified structure. Mr. Whalen stated that there is really no difference from moving to a manager form of government as Mr. Ferry is already acting in that capacity; running the City on a day-to-day basis under the oversight of Mayor and Council. Mayor and Council would remain the body who appoints and removes. The effective date for the new Charter would be January 1, 2014. Mayor Belisle stated that it is important to realize that the City hasn't had the professionalism we do now. It will not weaken anything for Mayor and Council as thru passages of ordinances you will specify how the manager runs the City, adding that the risks we run without changing are the chances for financial disasters. C. Owens agrees, further saying that there has been abuse in the past with the current charter and we need to make changes. Mr. Whalen stated that the proposal is really not a whole lot different than what we have now except the form of government. Charters are getting more difficult to change and are primarily governed by State law and must be consistent with State law; the draft today is "bare bones". Mr. Whalen then added that he likes the manager form of government. C. Owens asked why the weak form still exists and was told that many small cities can't afford to hire a professional. C. Graham asked will daily operations work thru ordinances & was told yes. Mayor Belisle reminded all that if the new charter passes in Spring Council will have to have the ordinances in place by 2013 year's end. Mayor Belisle informed all that at one time when Senoia was much smaller a part-time Mayor could sufficiently run the City however now that we're much larger the time to change is now. Changing will give a better "business sense" to running the City. C. Fisher added that if there are any doubts, nearly 2/3 of the cities or 60% of all run in this form of government. C. Owens asked what parameters or limits should we include in the proposed charter & was told that the City will stick to the GMA model ordinance and Council will put duties in to ordinances. Mayor Belisle asked about including term limits in the proposed. Mayor Belisle and C. Fisher are in favor of 3 consecutive terms for Council-2 consecutive terms for Mayor. Mr. Whalen has seen 2-year specified but not this length and does not see where including term limits has been beneficial. Mayor Belisle stated that with no opposition to term limits Mr. Whalen will draft the language & include it in the new charter. C. Fisher added that the limits would allow for a greater number to run, do their service and move on. C. Fisher questioned term limits for committees and was told most fall under State law. C. Graham asked if the manager would appoint committees & was told that appointments will remain as has been done in the past. Mr. Whalen informed all that new State law requires oath of offices for Mayor and Council to be administered by Probate Court-Coweta County. All appointed to committees will still be administered by the Mayor. C. Fisher then suggested that if we are placing all responsibilities on Mr.

Ferry we will need to hire him a part-time position to handle the website, economic development and contracts with the movie industry. Mr. Ferry doesn't agree and feels that a new position is not necessary. C. Fisher asked if our service levels are being met and what if we want something that Mr. Ferry can't do, or has the time to do? Mayor Belisle stated that all ordinances will be written by our City Attorney. C. Fisher would like to revisit in the event that Mr. Ferry becomes overwhelmed. C. Owens suggested having a Town Hall meeting to give the residents a chance to comment & was told by Mayor Belisle that this has been an agenda item since February 2012 and the residents have had plenty of time to comment. Mr. Whalen will make the language changes and additions discussed and will have prepared for a public hearing first meeting in November.

**4. ADJOURN**

Mayor Belisle made motion to adjourn the Council Work Session & was 2<sup>nd</sup> by C. Graham. Motion carried unanimously.