

WILLIAM B. WHITLEY
Mayor
JOHN B. "JACK" NICHOLS
City Attorney
VICKI WAINWRIGHT
Clerk / City Administrator



COUNCIL:
EDWARD GUINN
Mayor, Pro Tem
JACOB HOPKINS
GLENN HARRIS
RODRICK FLOWERS
DEBORAH WILLIAMS

June 10, 2025
Council Meeting @6:00 PM
Council Chambers
****Work Session to immediately Follow****

PRESENT

Mayor Barry Whitley
Mayor Pro-Tem Ed Guinn
Councilperson Deborah Williams
Councilperson Rodrick Flowers
Councilperson Glenn Harris
(Councilperson Jacob Hopkins - absent)

MEDIA PRESENT

TC NEWS

INVOCATION: Mayor Barry Whitley

OPENING STATEMENT: Vicki Wainwright

OLD BUSINESS:

Approval of the May 13th Regular & Work Session Council Meeting Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the May 13th Regular & Work Session Council Meeting Minutes by Mayor Pro-Tem Ed Guinn and seconded by Councilperson Rodrick Flowers. The vote was unanimous. (Council Member Jacob Hopkins was absent)

NEW BUSINESS:

Lynn Thaxton- Citizen Concern:

Mrs. Thaxton came before the Mayor and Council with concerns of things she feels has been going on for too long within the City of Butler. Her concern is due to the automobile break-ins within the city, that seem to pick up during the summer months. She said that children have been seen riding their bikes around neighborhoods after 1:00 in the morning. She said that she is not saying that the police are not doing their jobs, but something needs to be done, as every corner in the neighborhood has been hit with someone breaking into automobiles. She says this



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has been a problem off and on since 2021. The thief(s) goes into automobiles stealing guns and purses. They have also been knocking on windows. Ms. Thaxton also said that there are reports of these occurrences that are not in the system. Therefore, she does not feel that the numbers are correct as to the number of automobile break-ins. She said that her daughter's car was broke into a few years back, an officer came and took fingerprints and made a report but that report is not in the system, so one of her concerns is what other reports may be missing. Due to these thefts there are now guns on the street that shouldn't be there. Ms. Thaxton said that this should not be allowed to happen in Butler. She feels that a curfew should be implemented. Chief Woodard stated that he has a draft copy of a curfew ordinance that he is presenting to the Council tonight. Councilmember Deborah Williams said that whatever is done has to involve the parents. There is only so much that the police department can do when the culprits may be juveniles, and the juvenile court system is a whole different matter. Ms. Thaxton stated that she is willing to do whatever it takes to put an end to these issues as the citizens do not feel safe and this is small town Butler and people should feel safe. She doesn't want her daughter to live in Butler scared, and she doesn't want her daughter's neighbors to live scared either. City Administrator Vicki Wainwright said that all citizens need to be aware that they need to call 911 when something like this happens so that there will be a clear record of the incident. The call to 911 starts the process of sending the police to start their report. It was noted that just because this is a small town and everyone may know an officer or elected official, do not contact them instead of making a call to 911.

Ms. Thaxton also said that in November of 2022 her daughter was driving down the road into Butler when someone threw something and busted out her window. This was in the area around Gloria Street or Forest Pointe. The police were notified the following morning.

Ms. Thaxton said that people are not calling the police because they feel like nothing is going to be done and there is no follow-up on the incidents that are reported. She said that some people handle it themselves by trying to figure out who may have taken their valuables. Mayor Pro-Tem Guinn stated that is part of the problem. Many people complain, but never officially report any incidents. All incidents should be reported, initially through 911 and then the police will become involved.

The Council stated that no one should feel unsafe.



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Ms. Thaxton would like to see some accountability. She understands that the City's hands are somewhat tied if the suspects are juveniles, but she would like to see their parents held accountable. She would like to see their names in the paper and on social media. She would like the punishment to be stiff. She wants to see their feet held to the fire, no matter who it is. She would like people to think twice before they commit a crime in Butler. She feels that if a large enough fine for the parents is tied to violating the curfew that some of this could be resolved. The Council agreed and stated that something needs to be done before something really bad happens.

Chief Woodard said he would like to stress that only one car has had the window broken out in order to steal items inside. All of the other cars that had items stolen were not locked. That is what they are looking for, a crime of opportunity with little effort. The citizens must do their part. He also said that having serial numbers readily available on any firearms you own is very helpful if a weapon is stolen. He said that once a gun is stolen it almost always leaves the hands of the person who took it within 24 hours. The quicker the police have the serial number, the quicker it can go into the GCIC system.

Mayor Whitley said that he appreciates Ms. Thaxton's concerns and her coming before them. The city will be diligent in patrolling the neighborhoods. Councilmember Deborah Williams stated that unfortunately the police cannot stop every crime, that it will take the community to be aware and report things also. She said that the Council is always open to ideas or suggestions to keep Butler safe. She said that we all must work together.

GICH Program:

City Administrator/City Clerk Vicki Wainwright said that the GICH program, which is the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing, is a three-year strategic planning program that helps communities create and implement long-term housing strategies. She said that she would like the Council to agree to join forces with the Taylor County Board of Commissioners and the City of Reynolds to apply for this program in order to learn how to bring affordable, middle-income housing to the community. She said housing is needed badly for single people and young couples. She said that the only cost would be to allow her to attend two conferences a year.



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This will provide great networking opportunities with other communities that have been working with GICH, help our community to create and implement a locally based plan and learn some creative ideas for housing. Being part of GICH could also allow the city to make contact with potential developers who may be interested in bringing housing development to our area. Ms. Wainwright stressed that this is not Section 8 housing. The homes would be consumer financed and owned. This is not a subsidized type of housing. She also stressed that this program is just a strategic plan and does not include any type of funding for housing and there are no guarantees that developers will be interested. She also said that being part of GICH would definitely give the community a better chance to be noticed and shows that we are interested in better, affordable housing.

The application to apply for the GICH program is due by the end of July. Only a few communities are accepted each year. If accepted the committee will be made up of a team of approximately twenty local community leaders with a common goal....to bring much needed housing to our community.

Councilmember Williams said that housing is very, very important. People are having to move elsewhere because there is no decent place for them to live. She stated that she would love to serve on the committee.

A motion to partner with the City of Reynolds and the Taylor County Board of Commissioners to apply for the GICH program was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Ed Guinn and seconded by Councilmember Glenn Harris. The vote was unanimous. *(Councilmember Jacob Hopkins was absent.)*

Coin-Operated Devices- Amended Ordinance:

Attorney Jack Nichols stated that the Clerk had contacted him regarding the use of coin operated machines, and while looking through the current ordinance realized that the city's ordinance regarding coin-operated machines needed to be amended to comply with Georgia state law. The amendment would delete section 6-096 and a new section would be added that would lay out how the city would regulate the machines. The point of this would be to add more extensive rules as to how coin-operated machines can be used, where they can be used, and clarify that the machines have to follow all the state requirements. Under state law a business can have up to



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nine machines, but the City's ordinance will allow the city to limit that number to six per location. It was noted that the city cannot charge any fees for a business having the machines. The machines are regulated by the Georgia State Lottery and basically does not allow cities or counties to have much say in the regulations. It was noted that in some cases people are playing these coin-operated machines for money. It was stated that that is not legal, it is supposed to be for store credit or merchandise. In the case of violations, the Georgia State Lottery would be contacted and would enforce the violation. *(This is the first reading of the amended ordinance)*

FLOCK Cameras:

Chief Matthew Woodard reminded the Mayor and Council that a discussion regarding FLOCK cameras had been held during a work session following the May Council meeting. He noted that an agreement between Taylor County Sheriff John Sawyer and the City of Butler has been signed allowing some of the city of Butler's cameras to be placed outside of the city limits coming into Butler. He would like the council's approval to proceed with implementing FLOCK cameras in Butler. A motion to proceed was made by Councilmember Glenn Harris and seconded by Councilmember Rodrick Flowers. The vote was unanimous. *(Councilmember Jacob Hopkins was absent)*

Technology Fees on City Ordinance Violations:

During last month's meeting Chief Woodard requested adding a technology fee to city citations. There are currently not any technology fees added to city citations. Attorney Nichols checked to make sure an ordinance reflecting this was not needed. It is not needed, so he would like a motion from the Council to add the fee. A motion to add a \$25.00 technology fee to city ordinance citations was made by Councilmember Rodrick Flowers and a second was made by Councilmember Deborah Williams. The vote was unanimous. *(Councilmember Jacob Hopkins was absent)*



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DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Chief of Police Matthew Woodard said that the report from last month is in the binder.

A proposed Curfew Ordinance was discussed, as there is not currently a curfew ordinance in place for Butler. The proposed ordinance would cover 17-year-old and under juveniles. The ordinance would prohibit juveniles fifteen years of age and under from being on the streets of Butler between the hours of 10:30 PM until 6:00 AM each day. It would prohibit juveniles age sixteen and seventeen from being on the streets between the hours of midnight and 6:00 AM. The only exceptions would be going to or leaving a school event, work, or religious service. The First offense would create a warning or notice, which would remain in the City of Butler's system. The Second Offense would be a citation of up to \$500.00 and/or punishment of up to twenty days in jail issued to the juvenile's parent or guardian. ***(This was the First Reading.)***

Public Works Director David Windham said that the storm drain work around the courthouse square should be complete by week's end, depending on the rain. He said that the curbing on the north and east of the square is complete and sidewalks are being repoured on the north side of square. He said that the wide opening that has always been on north Ivey will be significantly narrower as there will now be curb and gutter there.

City offices will be closed on Thursday, June 19th for the Juneteenth holiday and on Friday, July 4th for Independence Day. Garbage pick-up for the week of the 4th of July will be on Saturday, July 5th.

Fire Coordinator Brandon Maddox said that the Butler Fire Department ran seventeen calls last month. Those were one person shot, one traffic accident with no injuries, six traffic accidents with injuries, three structure fires, one vehicle fire, one large vehicle fire, one difficulty breathing call, one service call, one smoke in the area call, and one wires down call.

He reminded everyone that the EV (Electric Vehicle) burn will be held on June 28th at 8:00 at the Butler Fire Department.



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Councilmember Deborah Williams asked if there had been any further discussion or plans regarding something in honor of Lula Mae Riley. Public Works Director Windham stated he had some ideas that he is working on in that regard.

ADJOURN

With nothing further to discuss, a motion was made by Councilperson Deborah Williams to adjourn and a second was made by Councilperson Glenn Harris. The vote was unanimous.
Councilperson Jacob Hopkins was absent)

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Mayor Barry Whitley

ATTEST

