



# CITY OF TOCCOA

## CITY COMMISSION

### MINUTES • JULY 28, 2025

Work Session

City Commission/Court Room

4:00 PM

92 North Alexander, Toccoa, GA 30577

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

| Attendee Name     | Title        | Status  | Arrived |
|-------------------|--------------|---------|---------|
| Terry Carter      | Mayor        | Present |         |
| Evan Hellenga     | Vice Mayor   | Present |         |
| Michelle Jamieson | Commissioner | Present |         |
| Gail Fry          | Commissioner | Present |         |
| Ron Matheson      | Commissioner | Present |         |
| Fredda O. Wheeler | City Manager | Present |         |
| John Dickerson    | Attorney     | Absent  |         |
| Beth Rider        | City Clerk   | Present |         |

#### II. AGENDA ITEMS

##### 1. Discussion of Fox Gives Preservation and Facilities Grant Program

Mayor Carter stated Commissioner Matheson and City Manager Wheeler attended a Webinar and he asked them to introduce the Grant. Commissioner Matheson stated we both received an email from Fox Gives outlining several Grant Programs and the one we were interested in was the 2025-2026 Single Year Grant Program category. Commissioner Matheson stated this Grant would fund purchase and installation of equipment such as Assisted Listening Devices, Listening and Staging Sound Equipment and Lighting Equipment, Projecting Equipment that will expand accessibility and availability of programming. Commissioner Matheson stated they attended the Webinar on June 11<sup>th</sup> and became more interested, Fredda got in touch with Mayor Carter to get the ball rolling. Mayor Carter stated we discussed it and asked Connie Tabor if she would be interested in applying for us. Mayor Carter stated there were steps we had to go through to get to a certain point, a pre-application or letter of intent had to be sent to apply. Connie did that and July 14<sup>th</sup> we got the approval to move forward to apply for the Grant. A Sub-Committee was formed, Ron Matheson, Terry Carter, Connie Tabor, Tim Mullen and Chris Chambers to see what needs at the Ritz they could apply for. Ms. Tabor stated the Committee met and there were five items that were discussed as needs. Ms. Tabor stated they prioritized the needs based on the plans from the Conditions Assessment Report done in 2012, a Preservation Plan done in 2014 and a Readiness Plan that was done in house on 2019. The Committee discussed the needs and chairs were the top priority, Ms. Tabor reported several issues with the chairs. The second need is house lighting, to change the lights you have to have a lift. They only last about three months because they are Mercury, they would use the same footprint and some of the wiring is frayed that is in there now. Mrs. Tabor stated the third item is something the Sound Engineer Chris Chambers and Friends of the Ritz had talked about, the LED Digital Wall. Mrs. Tabor stated that would go on stage and is something the performers ask about it when they have a show, they have a video to show. We could also use it for pre-advertising for upcoming events, advertise Sponsors and Friends of the Ritz could do fund raising with it. Mrs. Tabor stated the fourth item was Stage Curtains which were installed in the 80's and the fifth item is the Pit Area and that would be

to put a cover over the Orchestra Pit.

Mrs. Tabor stated the maximum amount of the Grant Award is \$100,000.00, it is a one to one match, for \$200,000.00 we determined what we thought could be the top three we could work for. Mrs. Tabor stated she has worked on the Grant Application through the portal and has talked with a lot of suppliers regarding chairs, LED lighting. Mrs. Tabor discussed many options for chairs.

Mayor Carter stated only the bottom area would be replace the balcony has been restored. Mayor Carter stated it got confusing because of the timing and we did all the leg work beforehand and once we got approved with Letter of Intent that we could move forward to the next phase, the deadline is August 1st and Connie would not have had time for us to have our meeting and put the application together for the Grant and be one of quality. After further discussions of other projects that need to be done, Commissioners made a unanimous consensus to move forward with the Grant and add to the agenda, and to use the funds from the CRA.

**RESULT: PRESENTATION**

2. Review of Street, Right-Of-Way, and Green Space Maintenance

Mayor Carter stated he had been contacted by a citizen who had concerns in his neighborhood and ask Mayor Carter to ride with him to look at the streets and sidewalks. Mayor Carter stated they rode down Pond Street, Whitman, Avon, Big A, Currahee Street regarding curbs and gutters, the sidewalks that are overgrown. Mayor Carter stated the Greenspaces and signage we had talked about hiring a contractor for those. Mayor Carter stated to Public Works Director Randy Smith we need to find your department the resources to clean up the streets.

City Manager Fredda Wheeler stated she and Public Works Director Randy Smith has had many lengthy discussions and presented a list of Public Works employees. She stated Randy has 8-10 employees that this will be their responsibility. Mr. Smith stated at this time the Prison System is not available to help. Ms. Wheeler stated she has reached out to Mr. Venezuela at VNC Landscape to give a quote to maintain the plants and shrubberies in the Greenspaces, our employees will continue to cut the grass. A couple of years ago we had an employee group of Firemen that would do street maintenance on their days off, we would pay them what the Street Department makes. Ms. Wheeler asked if we can adjust the budget and hire an additional two or three employees in the Street Department and create a crew and this would be their responsibility. Commissioner Fry asked how many miles of roads in the City. Mr. Smith stated 123 miles of roads and 200 acres of Greenspace, plus 26 acres of the Cemetery.

City Manager Wheeler stated we have explored many options of hiring employees and willing to do what is best for the City and the budget.

**RESULT: PRESENTATION**

**III. ADJOURN**

Mayor Carter adjourned the work session at 4:50 pm.

