

PUBLIC HEARING
November 7, 2016

A public hearing was held by the Hartwell City Council on Monday, November 7, 2016 in the council chambers of city hall with all members present except Councilmember Bill Griggs. Mayor Brandon Johnson called the hearing to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. and stated this was the first public hearing regarding the City's Fiscal Year 2017 budget.

City Manager David Aldrich reported that the 2017 budget was based upon a proposed tax mill rate of 11.3, which is the City's current millage rate. He stated this proposed budget was a tight budget, with no proposed tax increase. Overall, the proposed budget is up only about 2% from the previous year.

It was further reported by the City Manager that the budget included a proposed 5% increase in water-sewer rates, a possible 5% increase in Sanitation rates, and a proposed increase in gas customer charge (not on gas rates) from \$8.00 to \$12.00.

Councilman Hicks stated that he understood that the Fire Department would need a new pumper at a cost of approximately \$450,000. The City Manager replied that the City would not be purchasing a new pumper in 2017, but possibly in 2018 or 2019, which would be a decision of Council. As Councilman Hicks mentioned that the Fire Department needed new turnout gear, and asked what would happen if the Department did not get a grant for the turnout gear, the City Manager stated that obviously some information had been shared with Councilman Hicks that had not been shared with him. It was also questioned by Councilman Hicks whether or not this proposed budget included anything for the Fire Department building. The City Manager replied that nothing was included for the building, but the Fire Chief was to get back to him on proposals for a training room and bunkers, but had not yet done so.

The City Manager also reported that the proposed budget included a 3% cost of living increase for city employees. As he commented that each department took cuts in their respective departments, Councilman Haynie stated that since department heads were asked to look at their expenditures and cuts, he felt Council needed to demonstrate the same thing asked of department heads, by revisiting training/travel policy of Council. He added that department heads had to make some decisions on needed equipment, and they were to be commended.

As Councilman Hicks commented on the possibility of having three additional walls put up at the recycling center, the City Manager reported that this was a work in progress and the City needed to make sure it was profitable.

There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks to adjourn the hearing at approximately 6:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Turner
City Clerk