

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

December 1, 2014

PRESENT: Mayor Brandon Johnson, Councilmembers Arthur Craft, Bill Griggs, Tray Hicks, Tony Haynie, Mike MacNabb and Billy Ethridge. Others present were City Manager David Aldrich, City Attorney Robert Leverett, City Clerk Jean Turner, Members of the Press/Media, and Interested Citizens.

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Hartwell City Council was held Monday, December 1, 2014 in the council chambers of city hall, 456 E. Howell Street, Hartwell. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Brandon Johnson at approximately 7:00 p.m.

Following the invocation presented by City Manager David Aldrich, everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

Mayor's Comments:

- Downtown Christmas Tree Lighting last Friday evening went very well. Appreciation is expressed to City employees for their hard work in making the downtown area look very good for the Christmas season.
- Christmas Parade will be held this Friday, December 5th.
- Deepest sympathy is expressed to the family of long-time City employee, Barbara Norman, who passed away on December 16th. The Mayor asked Finance Officer Joan Hughes to come forward and make a presentation to Ms. Norman's son, Sam.

Ms. Hughes stated that this day was to be Barbara Norman's date of retirement from the City after approximately 30 years of service to the City. She was not only a co-worker and employee; she was like family, and a best friend. As Ms. Hughes presented Ms. Norman's retirement plaque to her son, Sam, she remembered words spoken by the pastor during the funeral service, saying, "Barbara is receiving the best retirement benefits she could receive right now because she is with her Lord and Savior." Mayor Johnson also stated that Ms. Norman was a very good, loyal City employee for many years and would be greatly missed.

Hearing no additions or corrections to the minutes of the public hearing and the regular council meeting held on November 3, 2014, a motion was made by Councilman Haynie to approve both as recorded. Motion was seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously.

Following the second reading of Ordinance No. 13-03-11, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks to adopt the Ordinance. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ethridge and carried unanimously. The Ordinance adopts the City's fiscal year 2015 budget, which includes the tax millage rate to remain at 11.3.

As discussion ensued concerning pedestrian crosswalks, Councilman Hicks made a motion to move forward with a traffic engineering study for crosswalk installations at the Library and Benson Street, Fairview Avenue and Benson, and Cleveland Avenue and Hwy. 29, with funds for the study to be taken from the City's sidewalk funds. Following further discussion, Councilman Hicks amended his motion to also include the location near the Northeast Georgia Bank. Motion was seconded by Councilman Griggs and carried unanimously. The cost of the study is expected to be between \$5,000 - \$15,000.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously to approve applications for alcohol license renewals for 2015 as submitted.

A motion was made by Councilman Griggs, seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously to approve a request from Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church for a parade with police escort on December 14, 2014, celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The parade would begin at the Hart County Library on Benson Street and continue to the Catholic Church located at 1009 Benson Street.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilman Ethridge and carried unanimously to approve a Memorandum of Understanding with Hart County regarding animal control.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilman MacNabb and carried unanimously to approve an amendment to the Intergovernmental Agreement regarding SPLOST IV for the town of Bowersville. The amendment is due to reallocation of anticipated project funds for Bowersville's walking track/bike path site development. Currently, the sum of \$70,000 is allocated for the walking trail/bike path, and the amendment to this Agreement will allocate \$15,000.00 for the walking track/bike path, and \$55,000.00 to be allocated for water capital improvements. This reallocation of funds was also approved by the voters in the November 4, 2014 election.

A motion was made by Councilman Ethridge to accept the low bid of \$17,680.28 from Mike Jones Ford Lincoln for a 2014 Ford F-150 truck for the Gas Department. Motion was seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously. As stated by the City Manager, this is a budgeted line item, and the new truck would replace a 2005 Ford Ranger which will be sold as a surplus item on GovDeals website.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks to table discussion regarding an extension of the Site License Agreement between the City and Conterra Ultra Broadband, LLC. Motion was seconded by Councilman Haynie and carried unanimously.

As Mayor Johnson stated that some city employees had asked for an extra one half day off during the Christmas holidays in lieu of a Christmas dinner, Councilman Hicks moved to allow the additional one half day, plus a Christmas dinner. Motion was seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously. City Hall will close at noon on Tuesday, December 23rd, with employees will returning to work on Friday, December 26th.

City Manager Comments:

- Encourage Council to look at the excellent job the Public Works Department did on Leard Street by replacing a large rusted out tile.
- Received from Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) just today a renewal Agreement with GMA for Telecommunications Services. Would like to go ahead and have this added to the agenda for approval since GMA has reviewed and advised the City regarding all leases over the last several years. Cost to the City would be \$2,253.50, which is a budgeted item.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks to add to the agenda the GMA Telecommunications Services Agreement Renewal as recommended by the City Manager. Motion was seconded by Councilman Griggs and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilman Haynie, and carried unanimously to approve the Telecommunications Services Agreement with GMA.

Council Comments:

- Councilman Hicks wished everyone a Merry Christmas. He highly recommended that everyone look in the downtown stores when shopping during the Christmas season.
- Councilman Ethridge thanked everyone for their attendance at council meetings with questions and concerns. He also thanked the Street Department for doing a very good job and urged each member of Council to go out and look at what they do.
- Councilman Craft agreed with Councilman Ethridge, stating that he had visited the Street Department crew as they worked on the Leard Street project. He also asked everyone to be safe over the holidays and not forget the reason for the season, and not to forget to vote the following day in the run-off election for Probate Judge.
- As Councilman Griggs asked the City Manager about a crane he had seen on the tower at the Public Works facility, the City Manager replied that it was there as part of an upgrade to the tower, and not at the City's expense.

Citizen Comments:

- DDA Director Henley Cleary reported that a Ladies Night Out would be held this Thursday evening from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m., with 18 downtown stores and restaurants participating. Discounts and prizes will be given at different stores. She also stated that the DDA would not be able to put on community events without the help of the men and women in the City's Public Works Department, Street Department, and the County Recreation Department.
- Ms. Mary Beth Focer recommended that those up for re-election in the City may want to make sure all votes are counted. She referred to 21 missing votes not counted in the May 20th election from the Reed Creek precinct. She further stated that the state Election Board was aware of this but had not yet held a hearing on the matter.

There being no further business to become before Mayor and Council, a motion was made by Councilman Griggs to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:38 p.m. Motion was seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Turner
City Clerk