

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
February 7, 2011

The Hartwell City Council met in regular session Monday, February 7, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the council chambers of city hall with all members present. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Jennifer Scott.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag by all in attendance, the Mayor asked that everyone pause for a moment of silence.

Mayor Scott stated that since she was absent from the January meeting, she wished to take a moment to wish everyone a happy and healthy new year. As she began to present her 'state of the city' address, the Mayor reported that municipal government work is extremely demanding and time consuming. She commended every individual working behind the scenes to keep Hartwell functional and safe for all citizens. In her prepared statement, the Mayor sharply criticized the local media for negative reporting, and she went on to say that she replaced the moment of prayer on the agenda with a moment of silence out of respect to the U. S. Constitution. She urged everyone to focus on positive ways to improve our community and stated that she was more than willing to sit down and talk to anyone face to face. As she concluded her comments, Mayor Scott also urged everyone to please thank a city or county government worker for the work they do if they should come in contact with them.

As the Mayor asked for approval of the January minutes, Councilman David Little stated that this country was founded on religion and he felt the council meeting should be opened up with prayer. He offered a motion to add "prayer" as item #4 on the agenda. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Sarah Mayfield. As discussion ensued, Councilman Tray Hicks stated that the Constitution of the State of Georgia allows non-sect prayer before each meeting, which means that every religion in the community is invited to attend the meetings and offer prayer. City Attorney Rob Leverett also stated that it was not illegal to open the meeting with prayer. The Mayor stated that she did not have an objection to prayer, but her only objection was the representation of only one faith. Councilman Little replied that members of the local ministerial association have been invited in the past to lead the Mayor and Council in prayer before each meeting. As the Mayor asked if this was any religious faith, Councilman Little stated, "any religion established in this community." As the vote was called, motion carried unanimously 6 to 0 to allow prayer before each council meeting.

A motion was made by Councilman Little to add to the agenda the authorization of the City Manager to investigate engineering firms for the City's water assessment needs. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks to add to the agenda the authorization of the City Manager to accept and proceed with the best bid for financing of the new city hall. Motion was seconded by Councilman Arthur Craft and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks to add to the agenda the consideration of signing the Service Delivery Strategy, with the stipulation of the time limit being the end of 2011. Motion was seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Mayfield to add to the agenda the consideration regarding the Little League Parade, with the date of the parade to be determined and forthcoming. Motion was seconded by Councilman Hicks and carried unanimously.

Hearing no additions or corrections to the minutes of the January 3, 2011 regular meeting and the January 18, 2011 called meeting, a motion was made by Councilman Craft to approve the minutes as recorded. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield and carried unanimously.

At this time Councilman David Little gave the invocation.

Hartwell NAACP President Randy Combs addressed Mayor and Council regarding the newly formed Ad Hoc Committee, of which he is chairman. The committee consists of members of the Hartwell Police Department, the Hart County NAACP, Pastor and Ministerial Alliance, the Iron Men of Hartwell, and the Director of the Hartwell Housing Authority. Mr. Combs explained that the Ad Hoc Committee was formed to address the Housing Authority assisted living areas and African-American situations. He further stated that the committee's mission was to research, evaluate, and provide effective solutions and suggestions to bring before the City Council for options to establish better community relations. Mr. Combs, along with Rev. Thomas Jackson, requested Council's support in the committee's efforts.

Considerable discussion ensued regarding an amendment to the City's Charter. Section 2.20(b) of the Charter grants the Mayor full authority to appoint committee members, and during last month's meeting, Council voted to amend the Charter to include wording which gives Council the right to overturn any committee appointments made by the Mayor as Council deems necessary or appropriate. Following considerable discussion regarding the City Attorney's proposed language for the Charter amendment, a motion was made by Councilwoman Mayfield to amend the language to state, "all committees and committee chairpersons and officers of the city council shall be appointed by the mayor, but each and every such appointment shall be subject to the right of the city council to override or rescind such appointment at any time by a vote of a majority of the city council, in its discretion. All committee members shall serve at the pleasure of the mayor and city council. The mayor shall have the power to appoint new members to any committee at any time, but each and every such appointment shall be subject to the same right of the city council to override or rescind such appointment or appointments." Motion was seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks to direct the City Manager and City Attorney to forward the Charter amendment request to the proper legislative delegates. Motion was seconded by Councilman Little and carried unanimously.

City Manager David Aldrich reported that he and Sanitation Superintendent Dean Carruth attended the American Public Works Association (APWA) district meeting in Athens recently regarding recycling. He stated they had the opportunity to tour the Athens recycling facility and Athens would be willing to take Hartwell's recycling materials should the City establish a recycling program. Mr. Aldrich further reported that curbside recycling was very expensive and he felt the City could begin a recycling program similar to the County's, with the City actually hauling the recycled waste to Athens. He also recommended Council authorize the purchase of a new much-needed garbage truck, which would also allow the old truck to be used for recycling. He suggested the City's Fairview Avenue property as a possible location for a recycling collection site since the gate could be locked at night and weekends. Councilman Hicks moved to authorize the City Manager to put together a business plan for a recycling center located on Fairview Avenue and to also look at other city-owned property sites, and not consider curbside sorting at this time. Motion was seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Little and seconded by Councilman Craft to authorize the City Manager to seek an engineering firm for the City's water assessment needs. Councilman Hicks pointed out a clarification that this would not be a study on the City's water assessment needs, rather a study regarding the wholesale of water to the Hart County Water & Sewer Authority. Motion was carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks to authorize the City Manager to accept and proceed with the best bid for financing of a new city hall. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield, and carried unanimously to sign the Service Delivery Strategy agreement with the stipulation of the time limit being the end of 2011.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Mayfield to approve the proposed Little League Parade, pending the date to be determined and forthcoming. Motion was seconded by Councilman Hicks and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Little, seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously to approve a request for gas line extension to service four poultry houses on Thurmond Adams Road.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilman Craft, and carried unanimously to ratify Council's recent decision to set the qualifying fee for municipal candidates at 3% of the annual salary of municipal elected officials.

A motion was made by Councilman Billy Ethridge, seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield, and carried unanimously to accept the low bid from C & M Equipment, Inc. in the amount of \$4,628.00 for diesel pump replacement located at the Fairview Avenue Public Works facility.

The City Manager explained that two service trucks were budgeted this year, one for the Gas Department and one for the Sewer Department. However, due to a Gas Department truck having been wrecked and totaled and the City receiving \$4,690.34 from the insurance company, it is requested that two service trucks be purchased for the Gas Department rather than one. A motion was made by Councilman Little to authorize the City Manager to accept quotes for three new utility trucks as requested. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield. Councilman Hicks stated that it had been discussed previously about looking at fuel efficiency vehicles. He encouraged the City Manager to possibly use some of the City's F-150 vehicles as utility vehicles. As the vote was called, motion carried 6 to 0 to authorize the City Manager to seek quotes for three vehicles, two for the Gas Department and one for the Sewer Department.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Mayfield to authorize the purchase of a drug dog for the Police Department. Motion was seconded by Councilman Little and carried unanimously. As explained by the City Manager, the City currently has one older drug dog, and this purchase would replace a K-9 that died over a year ago. As the deceased K-9 was insured, the City received a check for that loss, enabling the City to purchase another dog.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Mayfield to approve Resolution No. 02-07-11, authorizing the City to partner with the Georgia Department of Revenue in an effort to ensure that businesses are compliant with state and local sales tax laws. Motion was seconded by Councilman Little and carried unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Turner
City Clerk