

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
March 3, 2014

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

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Hartwell City Council was held on Monday, March 3, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the council chambers of city hall, 456 E. Howell Street. Mayor Brandon Johnson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance.

Following the invocation given by Rev. Terry Meeks of Cornerstone Baptist Church, everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

Mayor Johnson reported that he attended the newly-elected officials training in Athens recently and learned a lot, including several resources and programs available to cities.

A motion was made by Councilman Haynie to add to the agenda the appointment of members to the DDA Board, as well City Manager Comments and Public Comments. Motion was seconded by Councilman Hicks and carried unanimously.

Hearing no additions or corrections to the minutes of the February 3, 2014 regular council meeting, a motion was made by Councilman MacNabb to approve as recorded. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ethridge and carried unanimously.

Ms. Cheri Griggs reported that the Hart County Literacy Center would have a Chamber-sponsored open house on March 6 from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Adult Learning Center located on Benson Street. She issued an invitation to Mayor and Council and urged everyone to stop by and see what the Literacy Center has to offer the community.

Mayor Johnson updated everyone regarding his proposed all volunteer pro-business taskforce. He announced that the following business owners had been selected to serve on the taskforce: Tony Hilton, Alan Johnson, Landy Boles, Larry Haley, Ted Robinson, Bob Patel, Mark Seabolt, Charlene Lee, Bob Breffle, Ricky Carter, Greg Hall, and Bob Pickett. He further stated that these individuals would be contacted for an informal meeting possibly on March 28th.

Interim Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Director Henley Cleary updated Mayor and Council on activities of the DDA. Ms. Cleary reported that the DDA had a new social media volunteer, Jennifer Burroughs. A real estate book has been compiled of all the businesses in the DDA area, which should be published soon. She also stated that the first merchant's meeting was held in February, with the merchants requesting to continue having meetings on the second Wednesday each month at 8:00 a.m. Two new businesses will open on Depot Street in June; Betty's Bakery and Crystal's Closet. Blazer's has opened on North Forest Avenue and the DDA is continuing discussions with a restaurant group from Atlanta who has a strong interest in the old Pure Oil building located at

the corner of Howell and Jackson Streets. Also, someone has an interest in opening a breakfast and lunch restaurant downtown. Six businesses are interested in a façade grant (maximum of \$500 matching grant per each grant), to which Councilman Haynie stated that Council may wish to look at funding a portion of that. Further, Ms. Cleary reported that while attending the Main Street Development Institute the previous week, Hartwell was awarded the design award for the largest number of public improvement projects in 2014.

A motion was made by Councilman Craft, seconded by Councilman Griggs, and carried unanimously to approve a request from the DDA for street closings for the annual “Dancin’ on Depot” event on June 27th.

A motion was made by Councilman Haynie, seconded by Councilman Craft, and carried unanimously to approve a Memorandum of Understanding for the Main Street Program.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks to approve a request from the Hart County Community Theatre (HCCT) for a temporary alcohol permit for a Mardi Gras Ball to be held at the Teasley House, 440 E. Howell Street on March 8. The purpose of the event is to raise funds for operation of the HCCT. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ethridge and carried 5 to 0, with Councilman Griggs recusing himself due to being a board member of HCCT.

A motion was made by Councilman Ethridge, seconded by Councilman Craft, and carried unanimously to approve 2013 budget amendments.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilman Ethridge, and carried unanimously to approve an amendment to the City’s Travel Policy.

A motion was made by Councilman Griggs, seconded by Councilman Craft, and carried unanimously to approve a proposed contract agreement with Total Body Fitness. As explained by the City Manager, City employees would have the opportunity to participate in the fitness program offered by Total Body Fitness at a discounted rate of \$10/month for employee, and \$20/month for family, with the City paying half the cost for participants. As noted, this will be a one-year contract.

A motion was held by Councilman Ethridge, seconded by Councilman MacNabb, and carried unanimously to accept the low bid of \$7,100.00 from Process Controls for Influent Drive replacement for pump #2 at the wastewater treatment facility.

A motion was made by Councilman Griggs to accept the low bid of \$9,581.00 from Holiday Designs for new angel and snowflake Christmas decorations with LED warm white bulbs. Motion was seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously.

Mayor and Council heard the first reading of Annexation Ordinance No. 2014-01, annexation request of Brian Burroughs of Swamp Guinea Restaurant located on Reed Creek Highway.

A motion was made by Councilman Haynie, seconded by Councilman Craft, and carried unanimously to reappoint Ms. Kay Legg, Mr. Carey Jackson, and Ms. Kathy Bryant as members of the Downtown

Development Authority Executive Board. It was noted that these positions had also been advertised but no responses were received.

Council Comments:

- Councilman Hicks urged anyone looking for something to do to reach out as a volunteer where needed. Citizens may contact the Chamber of Commerce or Downtown Development Authority in an effort to make their interests known.
- Councilman Haynie asked the status of the Enigma Customs building recently destroyed by fire, to which the City Manager replied that he did not know but would speak with the Fire Chief the following day for an update.
- Councilman Griggs commended the Georgia Municipal Association for doing an excellent job with the recent newly-elected officials training in Athens, attended by both he and Mayor Johnson.

City Manager Comments:

- New backhoe has arrived and in operation.
- Will soon continue with sidewalk work on Franklin Street. Councilman Haynie suggested that sidewalks from the Middle School to Hwy. 29 again be reviewed.
- Should have a full, temporary crew for the Street Department by the beginning of April.

There being no public comments, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks to adjourn the regular meeting into executive session at approximately 7:30 p.m. for the purpose of discussing property lease. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ethridge and carried unanimously.

At the conclusion of the executive session, a motion was made by Councilman MacNabb to adjourn the executive session and enter back into regular session at approximately 7:58 p.m. Motion was seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks that the City of Hartwell begin negotiations with the Corps of Engineers to start a new lease on Hart State Park contingent upon those negotiations with the Corps of Engineers that the City pay off the outstanding bond and release the state from their contract with the Corps of Engineers. Motion was seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously.

There being no further business to come before Mayor and Council, a motion was made by Councilman Griggs to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:00 p.m. Motion was seconded by Councilman Hicks and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Turner
City Clerk

