

## REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

May 4, 2015

The Hartwell City Council met in regular session on Monday, May 4, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the council chambers of city hall, 456 E. Howell Street, Hartwell. Members present included Mayor Brandon Johnson, Councilmen Arthur Craft, Billy Ethridge, Tray Hicks, Mike MacNabb, Bill Griggs, and Tony Haynie. Others present included City Manager David Aldrich, City Attorney Robert Leverett, City Clerk Jean Turner, members of the press/media, and interested citizens.

Mayor Brandon Johnson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance. The invocation was given by City Manager David Aldrich, followed by everyone standing for the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag.

American Legion Post 109 Vice Commander Jerry Fulghum expressed appreciation to everyone who attended the dedication ceremony held on this date at 2:00 p.m. regarding the flag disposal box placed near city hall. Mr. Fulghum reported that a memorial service would be held on May 25<sup>th</sup> on the courthouse grounds, and encouraged citizens to let everyone know that we are a patriotic community by showing support for our veterans. Also, with the City's permission, a service will be held on June 15, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. to dispose of the flags that have been placed in the disposal box. Mr. Fulghum again expressed his appreciation to Mayor and Council for their patriotism. It was the consensus of Council to allow the flag disposal service on June 15<sup>th</sup>, with the City Manager to coordinate the event with the Fire Chief.

Mayor Johnson reported that the Lake Hartwell Dam Run held over the past weekend went very well. He expressed appreciation to the Park Rangers and Sheriff's Department for directing traffic for the event. He also stated that the Lake Hartwell Music Festival would be held May 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Long Point Recreation area, with food vendors, crafts, and nine local bands.

Hearing no corrections or additions to the minutes of the April 6, 2015 council meeting, a motion was made by Councilman Griggs to approve as recorded. Motion was seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously.

Ms. Nancy Clark, Chairperson of Hartwell Historic Preservation Commission, explained that the month of May was designated as Historic Preservation Month and she was delighted to present a new brochure of the community, which also includes the county. Ms. Clark thanked the committee who put the brochure together, and also thanked Mayor and Council for being supportive of the community. As read by the Mayor, a Proclamation was presented to Ms. Clark, proclaiming May 2015 as Historic Preservation Month.

Proclamations were read by the Mayor proclaiming May as National Bike Month, and the week of May 16-22, 2015 as National Safe Boating Week. An additional Proclamation was read by the Mayor, recognizing the week of May 3-9, 2015 as Municipal Clerks Week, and extending appreciation to the City's Municipal Clerk, Jean Turner, and all Municipal Clerks for their services.

A motion was made by Councilman Haynie to nominate Councilman Bill Griggs as voting delegate for the Georgia Municipal Association business meeting to be held during GMA's annual convention in Savannah. Motion was seconded by Councilman Hicks and carried unanimously.

In discussing bids received for the last phase of the natural gas pipeline replacement project along the Elberton Highway (Hwy. 77), the City Manager explained that each bid exceeded the engineer's anticipated budgeted amount of \$100,000 for the project. He further stated that the low bid of \$116,625.00 was submitted by Classic Mechanical, Inc., and recommended that the installation of gas services, from the tap at the main to the customer's meter, be removed from this contractor's bid; thereby, reducing the bid amount to \$94,125.00. Following discussion, a motion was made by Councilman Haynie to accept the bid from Classing Mechanical, Inc.

in the reduced amount of \$94,125.00. Motion was seconded by Councilman MacNabb and carried unanimously. It was noted that this would be funded from Gas Department budgeted funds.

A motion was made by Councilman Ethridge, seconded by Councilman Griggs, and carried unanimously to accept the low bid of \$40,268.70 from Consolidated Pipe & Supply, Inc. for materials for the 2015 Elberton Highway natural gas pipeline renewal project. It was noted that this was also a Gas Department budgeted item.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Hart County School District regarding the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program, by providing three police officers to be assigned (one each) to the Hart County High School, Middle School, and Hartwell Elementary. Motion was seconded by Councilman Haynie and carried unanimously. As stated by the City Manager, the purpose of the Resource Officers is to enhance the safety of the schools. It was explained by School Superintendent Jerry Bell that the officers would receive payment from the school system, as well as a car furnished by the school system.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Hart County Board of Elections for conducting elections for the City of Hartwell. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ethridge and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Craft, seconded by Councilman Ethridge and carried unanimously to accept the low bid of \$5,850.00 from Consolidated Pipe & Supply for a boring rig for the Gas Department. It was noted that this was not a budgeted item.

A motion was made by Councilman Griggs, seconded by Councilman MacNabb and carried unanimously to approve a request for the annual "Finish What You Start Run Through Hartwell" to be held on September 12, 2015, with traffic lane closures during the event. This event is an annual fundraiser for the Hart County Cross Country Booster Club.

City Manager David Aldrich reported that the City had been approved for loan funds from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) for improvements at the City's Waste Water Treatment Plant, mainly for the replacement of sand filters. GEFA approved \$980,000 in loan funds along with providing \$196,000 in principal forgiveness funds, totaling \$784,000 in actual loan funds to the City. Following discussion, a motion was made by Councilman Ethridge to authorize the City Manager to proceed with the loan process for the WWTP project. Motion was seconded by Councilman Haynie and carried unanimously.

The City Manager reported that GEFA had also approved a loan in the amount of \$3,863,000 along with \$500,000 in principal forgiveness funds for improvements at the City's Water Treatment Plant. Actual loan funds would total \$3,363,000 to be used largely for an additional clear well. As explained by the City Manager, the additional clear well is needed should a catastrophic failure occur causing the current clear well to be taken out of service. A motion was made by Councilman Craft, seconded by Councilman Griggs and carried unanimously to proceed with the loan requirements. It was noted that payments for both GEFA loans would be included in the City's 2016 budget. The City Manager also felt that part, if not all, could be funded from SPLOST funds.

Upon the retirement of Municipal Court Judge Frank George, resumes were received and interviews conducted following advertisement for the position. Councilman Hicks made a motion to appoint Attorney Warren Caswell as the City's Municipal Judge and Frank George as Judge Pro Tem. Motion was seconded by Councilman Griggs and carried unanimously.

Upon recommendation received from the City's Economic Development Committee, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks to approve a request for a loan for American Manufacturing in the amount of \$190,000 from the City's Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) for 15 years at 4% interest. Purpose of the loan will be utilized to purchase the former Ace Hardware building on West Johnson Street. As explained by Councilman

Hicks, the loan amount requested is \$90,000 more than RLF guidelines recommend, but the committee felt that the requested amount of \$190,000 could be loaned since there had been no activity in quite a while from the RLF. Councilman Hicks further stated that the committee may want to adjust the RLF guidelines accordingly. Motion to approve the loan amount of \$190,000 for 15 years at 4% interest was seconded by Councilman Griggs and carried unanimously. As explained by the Mayor, American Manufacturing would employ 15 or more employees for sewing operations for medical products.

In considering the City's health insurance coverage, a motion was made by Councilman Craft to remain as self-insured with the current insurance group. Motion was seconded by Councilman Haynie and carried unanimously.

As discussion ensued regarding property taxes, Mayor Johnson explained that the County was issued a Consent Order by the Department of Revenue (DOR) several years ago as a result of the DOR saying that property taxes were not fair across the community. All properties were reevaluated, followed by an appeal process, and the City allowed the County Board of Tax Assessors to evaluate all changes involved with city properties. The City Manager stated that final tax bills for the years 2009, 2010, and 2011 for city residents will be issued soon, and the tax millage rate would need to be set at the regular June council meeting.

#### City Manager Comments:

- County is assisting the City in paving cuts made to replace damaged drainage tiles.
- Patching will occur this week on Fairview Avenue, Leard Street, and South Forest Avenue, with the County assisting with their equipment and the City providing the hot mix. Councilman Griggs commented that since city residents also paid county taxes to help pave roads in the county, the County should also pave some of the roads in the city.
- Materials are beginning to arrive for the Johnny Street sewer upgrade project.
- Working with the County on the Service Delivery Strategy, which is due by the end of this year.

Due to the official election ballot for Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) District 2 Officers being received after this meeting agenda was prepared, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks to add this item to the agenda. Motion was seconded by Councilman Haynie and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks to accept the following for GMA's District 2 Officers for 2015-2016: President: Keith Turman, Royston Councilmember; 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: Danny Dunagan, Mayor of Gainesville; 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: James Grogan, Mayor of Dawsonville, and; 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President: Michael Clemons, Dahlonga Councilmember. Motion was seconded by Councilman Haynie and carried unanimously.

#### Council Comments:

- Councilman Hicks bragged on how well the City works with the School Board and others, and felt both the County and City governments are trying to work together today more than ever.
- Councilman Haynie urged citizens to participate in volunteering at least one day per week or month to assist in delivering meals to shut-ins under the 'Meals on Wheels' program. As stated by Councilman Haynie, approximately 45 applicants are on a waiting list to receive meals.

There being no further business to come before Mayor and Council, a motion was made by Councilman Craft, seconded by Councilman Haynie and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Turner  
City Clerk



