

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
November 7, 2011

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Hartwell City Council was held at 7:00 p.m. in the council chambers of city hall on November 7, 2011 with all members present except Councilman Van Senkbeil. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Jennifer Scott.

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence. The invocation was given by City Manager David Aldrich.

Mayor Scott stated that November marked the beginning of a very busy time of year. She urged everyone to please not forget how truly blessed we are while preparing Thanksgiving turkey and gathering around the table with family and friends. In reminding everyone of the natural disasters having occurred between December 2010 and the present time, including loss of lives, the Mayor asked that citizens make it a point to keep others in their thoughts and prayers and thank God for what we have. She also reported that November was Child Safety & Protection Month, Aviation Month, and Good Nutrition Month. November 11th marks the 93rd anniversary of Armistice Day, now known as Veterans Day. During this season, Mayor Scott also asked that everyone please contact churches, local food banks, or any other charitable organization to offer assistance in some way. She encouraged everyone present to pick up a list on the back table in the council chambers, listing local food banks in the area.

Hearing no additions or corrections to the minutes of the previous meeting, a motion was made by Councilman Billy Ethridge to approve as recorded. Motion was seconded by Councilman Tray Hicks and carried unanimously.

Mayor Scott asked for Council's approval to add to the agenda a request from the Chamber of Commerce for a parade permit. Councilwoman Sarah Mayfield moved to add this request to the agenda as item #16. Motion was seconded by Councilman Arthur Craft and carried unanimously.

Speaking on behalf of local Masonic Lodge #690, Mr. Matt Beasley requested permission to celebrate in the opening of the new city hall in the coming year by allowing the Lodge to participate by laying a cornerstone at the new facility. He explained that the last cornerstone was placed at the beautiful courthouse which burned during the 1960's, and this cornerstone lies in front of the local Masonic Lodge today. This prior cornerstone also contained a time capsule, of which many of the preserved artifacts are housed today at the Hart County Museum. Mr. Beasley stated the Lodge would bear all costs associated with the cornerstone and would coordinate the event and the layout of the cornerstone with Council. He further stated that the public event would be held on a Sunday afternoon, and asked for favorable consideration of Council. Councilman Hicks moved to allow Masonic Lodge #690 to conduct a ceremony to lay a cornerstone and time capsule at the new city hall, with layout of the cornerstone to be approved by Council. Motion was seconded by Councilman David Little and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Little to accept the recommendation of Finance Officer Joan Hughes to accept the low bid from Williamson & Company to conduct the City's annual audit. The bid amount was \$18,200 each year for years 2011, 2012, and 2013, totaling \$54,600. Motion was seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Craft, seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield and carried unanimously to approve a parade permit for the celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe as requested by Pastor Fr. Rafael Castano of Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church. The parade is scheduled for Sunday, December 11, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. on Benson Street, from the Library to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church.

Upon recommendation of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), a motion was made by Councilman Little to approve the appointments of Ms. Nicki Meyer, Mr. Terry Shugart, Ms. Kathy Bryant, and Ms. Peggy Vickery to serve on the DDA Board of Directors. These appointments will replace Mr. Steven Mouchet, Mr. Russell Davis, and Mr. Brian Griggs, all of whom do not wish to be reappointed, and Mr. Alan Johnson upon his recent resignation. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ethridge and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilman Ethridge and carried unanimously to approve a lease agreement with AT&T, permitting AT&T to install, operate, and maintain telecommunication equipment on city-owned property located on Fairview Avenue.

A motion was made by Councilman Little, seconded by Councilman Hicks and carried unanimously to approve a natural gas service agreement with Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company, LLC (TRANSCO) regarding gas storage. The City Manager explained that the term of the agreement had been extended from an expiration date of 2013 to 2023.

Mayor Scott reported that she had been contacted by a number of business owners on South Forest Avenue regarding the possibility of installing a handicap ramp in the area of the businesses. The City Manager stated that due to the significantly elevated area and the need to meet ADA regulations, he would suggest that an engineering study be conducted. He recommended that Robert and Company be contacted to see what it would cost for such a study, noting that Robert & Company had previously been involved in the City's Streetscape Project. A motion was made by Councilman Craft, seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield and carried unanimously to authorize the City Manager to pursue the engineering cost estimate.

Councilwoman Mayfield stated that in view of information received by Council, she offered a motion to set the City's tax millage rate at 9.60. Motion was seconded by Councilman Hicks and carried unanimously.

As the first reading of Budget Ordinance No. 2011-03 was presented, the City Manager explained that this was a tight budget and praised department heads and employees for assisting each other when needed. He reported that no increases in service fees are included in the proposed budget, and a 2% cost of living pay increase is recommended for city employees. Mayor Scott stated that she was extremely aware of how hard city employees worked, and recommended a 3% pay

increase rather than 2%. The City Manager explained that the additional increase is estimated to total approximately \$35,000, which could be transferred from the gas fund. A motion was made by Councilwoman Mayfield to increase employee pay from 2% to 3%. Motion was seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously.

Councilman Little made a motion to amend the proposed budget by taking \$6,000 from the contingency fund and allocate this amount to the already budgeted \$500 for Hart Partners, for a total of \$6500. Motion was seconded by Councilman Hicks and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously to approve a request from the Chamber of Commerce for a permit for a Christmas parade to be held on December 9, 2011 beginning at 6:30 p.m. at Bell's Shopping Center, traveling on Franklin Street and ending at the High School on Campbell Drive.

There being no further business to come before Mayor and Council, a motion was made by Councilman Craft to adjourn the meeting and enter into executive session at approximately 7:35 p.m. to discuss personnel. Motion was seconded by Councilman Hicks and carried unanimously.

At the conclusion of the executive session the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Turner
City Clerk