

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
July 3, 2017

PRESENT: Mayor Brandon Johnson, Councilmembers Arthur Craft, Tony Haynie, Bill Griggs, Mike MacNabb, Tray Hicks, and Billy Ethridge.

OTHERS PRESENT: City Manager David Aldrich, City Attorney Robert Leverett, City Clerk Jean Turner, Interested Citizens and Members of the Press/Media

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Hartwell City Council was held on Monday, July 3, 2017 in the council chambers of city hall, 456 E. Howell Street, Hartwell. The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Brandon Johnson.

Following the invocation given by Mayor Johnson, everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag.

Mayor Johnson expressed appreciation to everyone involved in the fantastic annual Pre-4th event during the past weekend.

Upon recommendation of the Mayor, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks to add school route update to the agenda as item #13, and Hart State Park update as item #14. Motion was seconded by Councilman Haynie and carried unanimously, 6 to 0.

Hearing no additions or corrections to the minutes of the June 5, 2017 regular meeting, and the June 13, 2017 called meeting, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks to approve as recorded. Motion was seconded by Councilman MacNabb and carried unanimously.

As discussion ensued regarding Resolution No. 2017-07-03, increasing compensation for Mayor and Councilmembers, it was explained by Councilmembers Haynie and MacNabb that upon conducting a review of compensation for other cities in Georgia comparable in size to Hartwell, it was found that no two cities were the same. Since health insurance under a self-insured plan had been provided to Mayor and Council for many years, the current salaries for the elected officials have been maintained. However, earlier this year the City changed from a self-insured plan to a fully insured plan due to a drastic increase in cost of coverage, and due to the elected officials not considered full-time employees, they are no longer provided health insurance under the new plan. In order to compensate for the loss of insurance coverage, and since there had been no increase in salaries of the elected officials since at least 1977, or before, it was the desire of Council to increase their compensation. Following discussion, a motion was made by Councilman MacNabb to adopt Resolution No. 2017-07-03, by complying with the conditions of Georgia Code 36-35-4, to increase the Mayor's salary from \$400 per month to \$1,000 per month, and increase the salary of councilmembers from \$200.00 per month to \$800.00 per month, and if Mayor and Council ever vote for health insurance coverage to be provided by the City for Mayor and Councilmembers, the salary of the elected official who chooses to receive such health insurance coverage shall automatically revert back to the old rate of compensation. Motion was seconded by Councilman Haynie and carried unanimously.

Mr. Lloyd Williamson of Williamson & Co., CPA's presented the City's annual audit report. As Mr. Williamson gave a summary of the City's financial activity during fiscal year 2016, he reported that his accounting firm issued an unmodified ("clean") opinion on the financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2016.

Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Executive Director Henley Cleary gave a quarterly report regarding events held in the city, as well as project updates and new downtown businesses.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks to approve a request from Northeast Georgia Council on Domestic Violence (NEGACDV) for closure of Carolina and Depot Streets on October 7, 2017 for the Bikes, Blues & BBQ event. Motion was seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously. This will be a major fund-raising event for the NEGACDV tri-county area, with an expected 100 bikers to be escorted into the city by state troopers. Food, music, and craft vendors are also planned to be part of this event.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilman Griggs, and carried unanimously to approve the application of Omar Vega Barrera for a beer and wine license for "Rolling Chefs, LLC," located at 238 E. Howell Street, Hartwell.

A motion was made by Councilman Griggs, seconded by Councilman Craft, and carried unanimously to approve the application of Kayla M. Middleton for a beer and wine license for Hart County Community Theatre at 83 Depot Street, Hartwell.

Upon recommendation of the City Manager and other city officials involved in reviewing bids for a new garbage truck, a motion was made by Councilman Ethridge to accept the bid of \$143,075.95 from RDK Truck Sales for a 2018 Freightliner Chassis with 2018 PacMac RLX20 Body. Motion was seconded by Councilman MacNabb and carried unanimously. As explained by the City Manager, although this was not the lowest bid, it was felt to be in the City's best interest to purchase this machine due to being bigger, faster, and bulkier. It was also stated by the City Manager that the City proposes to enter into an agreement with Georgia Municipal Association for payment of the truck under GMA's Lease-Purchase Program.

A motion was made by Councilman Haynie to authorize the City Manager to proceed with the process of evaluating bids received for utility construction for the Oakview Crossing project, and bring back before Council for bid approval. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ethridge and carried unanimously.

In working with the school system regarding traffic congestion around the three schools in the city, a proposed traffic plan was submitted by Chief of Police Anthony Davis and Assistant Chief Stan Sayer. Due to the schools being within a block of each other, the traffic routes have been reworked, as shown on a map/diagram presented to Mayor and Council. A motion was made by Councilman Hicks to approve the proposed traffic plan around the schools. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ethridge and carried unanimously. Councilman MacNabb commended the Chief of Police, Assistant Chief, and school system for their efforts to ease the traffic problems around the schools.

In presenting an update of the Hart State Park project, Councilman Hicks reported that all of the requirements the City asked for from the Corps of Engineers, in order to pursue a lease from the Corps, were approved. These requirements included that the lease be in the city's name, be a state-form of lease, a financeable lease, and be a 50-year lease. Councilman Hicks also presented the Master Plan for the Park, which utilizes every section of the Park. He further stated that the terms of the lease had been approved by Council during a called meeting, but not yet signed until reviewed by the Environmental Protection Agency and other agencies. Appreciation is extended to the Corps for not saying "no" to the project, to Congressman Doug Collins, Senator Johnny Isakson, Joel Katz of Congressman Collins' office, Edward Tate of Senator Isakson's office, Representative Alan Powell, and Mr. Shawn Davis of Breakpoint Consulting. Councilman Hicks also thanked the members of city council and citizens for continuing to stay behind this project and working toward the future.

City Manager Comments:

- Still running behind with limbs, but extra person has been added to assist in the pickup. Chipper has now been repaired and should be back on schedule soon.
- Items not allowed are still being placed in the recycling container on Carter Street. Anyone caught placing such items will be prosecuted.
- Hwy. 172 project moving along well.

Council Comments:

- Councilman Hicks encouraged everyone to have a fun 4th of July and be very responsible.
- Councilman Haynie reiterated the City Manager's statement regarding recycling. He encouraged help from citizens in policing the recycling center, stating that the city would stop its recycling if citizens continued to place prohibited items into the recycling container. He also expressed appreciation to the City Manager, and the employees responsible for continuing to pick up limbs and sticks.
- Councilman Griggs thanked Councilman Hicks for his work on the Hart State Park project. He also thanked the Public Works Department for their quick cleanup of the streets following the Pre-4th event.

There being no further business to come before Mayor and Council, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:10 p.m. Motion was seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Turner
City Clerk