

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
November 2, 2015

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Hartwell City Council was held on Monday, November 2, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the council chambers of city hall, 456 E. Howell Street. Present included Mayor Brandon Johnson, Councilmembers Tray Hicks, Bill Griggs, Billy Ethridge, Tony Haynie, Arthur Craft, and Mike MacNabb. Others present were City Manager David Aldrich, City Attorney Robert Leverett, City Clerk Jean Turner, interested citizens, and representatives from the media/press.

Mayor Brandon Johnson called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance. Following the invocation given by the Mayor, everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag.

Councilman Haynie motioned to add to the meeting agenda, after item #13, an Executive Session to discuss pending litigation, real estate, and personnel. Motion was seconded by Councilman MacNabb and carried unanimously.

Mayor's Comments:

- Appreciation is extended to City Manager David Aldrich, City Administration, Street Department personnel, and anyone who assisted with the Department of Transportation's tree removal project on Athens Street.
- Halloween Monster Mash went really well and appreciation is extended to the Downtown Development Authority for putting on this event.
- In a recent ceremony, the City's first public Pocket Park was dedicated to the late former councilmember Sarah Mayfield. In appreciation for her many years of service and valuable contribution to the city, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks to name the Park "Sarah J. Mayfield Memorial Park." Motion was seconded by Councilman Griggs and carried unanimously. The Mayor also expressed appreciation to Councilman Arthur Craft for spearheading the Park project.
- The Retail Strategies project is now in place, the purpose of which is to promote and secure commercial business.
- A Letter of Intent has been signed regarding the sale of Cateechee Golf Course. New owners will take over operation of the golf course, but will not be purchasing the City's property at this time.

Chamber of Commerce Director Nicki Meyer reported that 178 anglers participated in the recent three-day bass tournament on Lake Hartwell. She stated that this was the first time for a locally developed fish return process where all the fish were placed back in the lake. Ms. Meyer also personally thanked Mr. John Howard for his planning and support of the tournament, and Mr. Howard commended members of the Hart County High School Key Club for their assistance in getting the fish back into the lake.

Hearing no additions or corrections to the minutes of the October 5<sup>th</sup> council meeting, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks to approve as recorded. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ethridge and carried unanimously.

Speaking on behalf of the Hart County Support Group, Mr. Scott Hardigree requested that the City endorse a letter of support, along with many other entities, requesting the state's approval for additional funding for the proposed College and Career Academy. As explained by Mr. Hardigree, Hart County was awarded grant funds for the College and Career Academy in the amount of \$1.2M, and not the expected \$3.1M. Mr.

Hardigree further reported that an additional amount of \$500,000 in grant funds was awarded for the Academy due largely to the efforts of Senator Bill Jackson. Senator Jackson will also work to have another \$500,000 placed in the state's 2016-2017 budget to assist with the construction of the proposed College and Career Academy. A motion was made by Councilman Hicks to sign the letter of support. Motion was seconded by Councilman Haynie and carried unanimously.

Mr. Shawn Davis of Break Point Consulting gave a presentation of a draft Master Plan for Hart State Park, depicting the proposed future use of the Park. Mr. Davis explained that the City proposed to lease the Park from the Corps of Engineers and sublease all or portions of the Park for the purpose of developing and operating a resort development. As part of the process for leasing the property, an Environmental Assessment is also required, which has been completed. Following the presentation, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks to accept the Master Plan as presented, have public comments opened up until November 16, 2015, and to approve the Request for Qualifications/Proposals, all of which will be placed on the City's website. Motion was seconded by Councilman Haynie and carried unanimously.

Mayor and Council heard the first reading of Budget Ordinance No. 2015-05. Mayor Johnson stated that the proposed 2016 budget included a tax millage rate increase from 11.3 to 12.3 mills. The City Manager explained that the budget included additional personnel. One additional employee is proposed for the Fire Department to allow for a 3-man shift on all shifts, one Information Technology (IT) person is proposed for Administration, and one additional employee is proposed for the Water-Sewer Department. Other proposals included in the budget consist of a 2% increase in water-sewer rates, and a 3.5% increase in natural gas rates. Although a 2% cost of living pay increase is included for city employees, the City Manager stated that he would like to see a 3% increase, but anything Council would approve is appreciated. Councilman Hicks clarified that none of the increases in the budget have anything to do with the Hart State Park project or Retail Strategies, which are funded through moneys allocated from Economic Development Funds.

A motion was made by Councilman Griggs, seconded by Councilman Ethridge, and carried unanimously to approve a request from Hart County NAACP for a Black History Parade scheduled for 1:00 p.m. on February 20, 2016.

Upon request from Leadership Hart Class of 2015, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks to support the initiative of the group's proposed public arts program. Motion was seconded by Councilman MacNabb and carried unanimously. The vision for the public arts program is to place fiberglass pieces of art around town, each to be painted by local artists or art groups.

A motion was made by Councilman Craft to approve the repair of the garbage truck by Rush Truck Center in the amount of \$15,670.00. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ethridge and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Ethridge to approve material for the Carter Street water main upgrade in the amount of \$31,491.55, and approval of material for upgrade of the North Carolina Street water main at a cost of \$18,809.35. Motion was seconded by Councilman Hicks and carried unanimously. It was noted that both projects are funded through SPLOST funds.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilman Griggs and carried unanimously to approve the updated Comprehensive Plan, which will also be available for viewing on the City's website.

A motion was made by Councilman Haynie, seconded by Councilman Craft and carried unanimously to adjourn into executive session to discuss pending litigation, real estate, and personnel.

Following executive session discussions, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks to enter back into regular session. Motion was seconded by Councilman Haynie and carried unanimously.

City Manager Comments:

- Highway 172 will be blocked for a while due to drainage problems; City is working with DOT on this problem.

Council Comments:

- Councilman Hicks thanked everyone who worked on the City's updated Comprehensive Plan
- Councilman MacNabb reminded everyone of Veteran's Day on Wednesday, November 11<sup>th</sup>, and encouraged citizens to place a green lightbulb in outside fixtures to honor all veterans.
- Councilman Griggs stated that the recent Halloween Monster Mash held on Depot Street was the best he had ever seen.

Citizen Comment:

- Mary Beth Focer asked what steps were being taken regarding update of the zoning map. The City Manager replied that this was being worked on by the Zoning Administrator. Ms. Focer also stated that legal steps are possible for anyone who wished to deannex their property from the city limits.

There being no further business to come before Mayor and Council, a motion was made by Councilman Griggs to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. Motion was seconded by Councilman Hicks and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Turner  
City Clerk