

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

April 6, 2009

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Hartwell City Council was held on Monday, April 6, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the council chambers of city hall with all members present.

Following the invocation by Richard Sheller, everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag.

Hearing no corrections or additions to the minutes of the previous meeting, a motion was made by Councilwoman Mayfield to approve as submitted. Motion was seconded by Councilman Gordon and carried unanimously.

Councilman Gordon reported that someone from the Department of Labor would be at the Chamber of Commerce office each Wednesday April 22 through May 27 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. to assist the unemployed in finding available jobs, as well as assistance with preparation of employment resumes.

Mayor and Council received an update from Ms. Ilka Delker, liaison with the University of Georgia and the Archway Program. Ms. Delker presented a list of four priority areas the community has identified for Archway to work on. These areas include tourism, planning and vision, leadership development, and education.

Mayor Beasley presented a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to Finance Officer Joan Hughes, awarded by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada. As stated by the Mayor, Ms. Hughes was responsible for preparing the City's award-winning comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR.) He further stated that the Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. Ms. Hughes expressed appreciation to her staff, City Manager, and Mayor and Council, stating that she could not achieve this recognition without them.

Hart County NAACP President Randy Combs addressed Mayor and Council regarding the Hartwell Police Department. Mr. Combs referred to a recent incident between Officer Bobby Mitchell and Mr. Jimmy Lee Blackwell, with the incident causing the loss of one of Mr. Blackwell's eyes. Mr. Combs repeatedly asked for the dismissal of Officer Mitchell, stating that the incident was a case of racial profiling. He also asked that more African Americans be placed in supervisory positions in the Police Department. Pastor T. L. Jackson stated that this was a right or wrong issue and not a black and white issue. He called upon local government officials to establish some type community relations. Mr. Ed Dubose asked that the Mayor make a statement that he did not condone this violence or racial profiling. Mayor Beasley acknowledged that he did not condone racial profiling in this community or any community.

Mayor Beasley reported that he had received a letter from Kennesaw State University (KSU) informing him that Hart County High School student Tyler Glenn had been selected to participate in a juried exhibition of high school artists during the All-State Art Symposium recently held at KSU. The Mayor stated that this was just another example of the fine performances we are getting from our young people through the school system.

Councilman Tray Hicks reported that the City would be participating in the Keep America Beautiful Great American Cleanup event on April 25th. As chairman of the City's cleanup committee, Councilman Hicks asked for volunteers to form groups of four to help clean all city streets, and stated that eight additional sponsors were needed for the event. He asked that residents limit heavy items, such as old refrigerators, washing machines, etc., to two items per household placed out for pickup, and no more than four tires per household. No oils, paints, batteries, or any solvents are to be picked up. City Manager David Aldrich also recommended that heavy items be picked up by City crews on the following Monday. Councilman Hicks moved that the City waive fees for any pickups during this scheduled cleanup weekend and also that the City agrees to be one of the sponsors for the event at a cost not to exceed \$200.00. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield and carried unanimously. Councilman Hicks also stated that shirts for participants would be bid locally, and further reported that the event would be coordinated with the County's cleanup planned for the weekend of April 18th.

Councilman Gordon reported that the Insurance Committee asked for three quotes for Workers Compensation Insurance coverage and received two quotes. Franklin Insurance Agency submitted a quote of \$119,671, and a quote of \$109,453 was received from Georgia Interlocal Risk Management Agency (GIRMA.) J. Smith Lanier chose not to submit a bid for Workers Comp. Upon recommendation of the Insurance Committee, a motion was made by Councilman Gordon to accept the quote from GIRMA in the amount of \$109,453 for the City's Workers Compensation Insurance coverage. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield and carried unanimously.

As Councilman Gordon reported on quotes received for the City's Property and Liability Insurance coverage, he stated that certain circumstances would need to be considered. Trident Insurance Services, the City's current insurance carrier through Franklin Insurance Agency, submitted a quote of \$129,756. Georgia Municipal Association submitted a quote of \$127,738, and a quote in the amount of \$110,954 was received from J. Smith Lanier. It was stated by Councilman Gordon that when the City's 3% local vendor set-aside is applied to Franklin Insurance Agency, their bid becomes \$125,863. Councilman Gordon also stated that inmate medical insurance had been considered, which would add a minimum of \$10,000 in premiums to the Franklin Insurance and J. Smith Lanier quotes, with the inmate coverage already included in the GMA quote. One other issue to be considered is the fact that Trident, current carrier, has hired an attorney for the City for certain ongoing litigation, and there was some concern that they may lose their enthusiasm for aggressive representation if they were no longer the City's carrier. Following discussion, and upon recommendation of the Insurance Committee, a motion was made by Councilman Gordon to accept the quote from Trident in the amount \$129,756, with the idea that the City would continue to receive consistent ongoing representation. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield and carried unanimously.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks to accept the additional \$10,000 inmate medical insurance premium. No second to the motion was received. Following further discussion, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks to table discussion regarding inmate medical insurance coverage. Motion was seconded by Councilman Gordon and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilman Gordon, and carried unanimously to approve a request from Jennifer Shumaker for a permit for a "Show off Your Car" parade and a cook-off on June 6, 2009 at Hart County High School. The City Manager was asked to

find out if this parade was to be a re-route traffic parade or like the Little League parade with police escort.

A motion was made by Councilman Little, seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield, and carried unanimously to approve a request from the Hartwell Service League for the annual Pre-4th Extravaganza around the town square on June 27th, and also permission to close a section of Highway 29 through the downtown area during the festival, and approval of a children's parade during the event.

A motion was made by Councilman Evans to approve a request from Denise Martin for a block party on April 10th in the Rome community, and allowing the street to be blocked off at Savannah Street and College Avenue. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield. Councilman Hicks stated that he would have to vote "no" due to the fact that the City did not receive a reasonable advanced notice. He further asked if the City could just provide extra help to direct traffic. Councilwoman Mayfield suggested that the event be held on one side of the street or the other, and not block off any streets. Councilman Gordon also stated that he was not against the event, but would vote against blocking off streets. Following discussion, Councilmembers Evans and Mayfield rescinded their motion and second. Councilman Hicks made a motion to have an extra patrol car in the area during this event to insure the safety of children. As discussion ensued regarding liability issues, Councilman Hicks withdrew his motion. The City Manager was asked to make the Police Department aware of the event in case congestion occurs in the area.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield, and carried unanimously to approve a request from the Hartwell Downtown Development Authority to hold the following events during 2009: Dancin' on Depot June 26, Arts in hARTwell festival September 26, Mayor's Monster Mash in late October, and the annual tree lighting on November 24th.

A motion was made by Councilman Little, seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield, and carried unanimously to approve a beer/wine license for Sam Leon Gantt of Hartwell Pizza Hut.

Councilman Little reported that it was the recommendation of the City Hall Building Committee to hire Trehel Corporation to do a feasibility study to include a master plan and programming phase, a topographical survey, and schematic design regarding a proposed new 2-story city hall. Councilman Little explained that a new 2-story facility would include the Police Department, municipal offices, jail, and council chambers. As recommended by the committee, Councilman Little moved to approve the expenditure of \$12,500 for the feasibility study by Trehel Corporation. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield. As discussion ensued, Mayor Beasley voiced concern that bids were not sought for the study. Councilman Hicks reiterated the Mayor's concern, and stated that he would like to see the costs of the other facilities considered for a city hall in order to make comparisons. As commented earlier by Councilman Little, a new 2-story city hall facility was the committee's first choice. As the Mayor called for a vote, Council voted unanimously to approve the study by Trehel for \$12,500.

Mayor and Council heard the first reading of Ordinance No. 2009-02 regarding the identity theft prevention program to comply with federal regulations. Councilman Hicks questioned why the Finance Officer would not be required to follow the same guidelines as each employee in the Finance Department regarding a requirement for each employee's password for customer accounts to be changed on a regular basis. The City Manager was asked to follow up on this concern.

A motion was made by Councilman Gordon to authorize the sale of surplus equipment through the Georgia Municipal Association Gov Deals program. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield, and carried unanimously to approve the removal and replacement of sand for waste water treatment sand filters at a cost of \$22,597.41.

Mayor Beasley expressed his opposition to building a new city complex, explaining that he felt it was a critical time more than ever to look at consolidation, whether it is consolidation of services or consolidation of governments. He stated that he believed consolidation would save in building, and eliminate disputes over jurisdiction. He also felt this would be a good project for the University of Georgia and the Archway Program to assist us with.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Turner
City Clerk