

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
July 6, 2009

The Hartwell City Council met in regular session Monday, July 6, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the council chambers of city hall with all members present. Mayor Matt Beasley called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance.

Following the invocation given by the Mayor, everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

As the meeting began, Mayor Beasley urged Council to be cautious in considering some of the requested items on the agenda due to budget restraints. He stated there were warnings all around from the state level to the federal government concerning budget cuts. The Mayor read a portion of a letter from Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Mike Beatty, announcing a reduction in spending in virtually every aspect of the State's budget due to declining revenues.

Representing the Hart County Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Bill Griggs requested support from Mayor and Council in hosting the Bass Federation Divisional Tournament on Lake Hartwell in March and April next year. As explained by Mr. Griggs, this tournament will bring in approximately 112 fishermen from seven southern states and one from South Africa, which will generate significant economic impact. He requested Council's approval of payment of one half the fees, along with the County, for hosting the tournament. Following discussion, a motion was made by Councilman Tray Hicks to approve funding of approximately \$8,000 to cover one half of the cost in supporting this tournament. After further discussion, Councilman Hicks amended his motion to state that the City would fund up to \$8,000 in supporting the tournament. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield. Upon further discussion, the motion was again amended by Councilman Hicks to state that the City would support the Georgia Bass Federation Tournament. The second to the motion was also amended by Councilwoman Mayfield. Motion carried unanimously. Mayor Beasley asked Mr. Griggs if bids would be sought for hotel/restaurant accommodations for the tournament participants. Mr. Griggs replied that the Chamber would seek bids for these services.

Mayor and Council also heard a request from Mr. Griggs for the appointment of two members of Council to serve on a committee along with two members from the County and two members from the Chamber of Commerce to look into job descriptions for an individual to explore the operating procedures of the mega ramp. Upon recommendation of Mr. Griggs, a motion was made by Councilwoman Mayfield to appoint Councilmembers Tray Hicks and Mike Gordon to serve on this committee. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Ilka Decker, Archway Partnership Coordinator, addressed Mayor and Council regarding a possible grant (up to \$25,000) from the Georgia Tourism Foundation Co-Op Program. Ms. Decker stated that the deadline for applying for the grant was July 29th, and she requested approval of the grant application, requiring a 50% local match. She further explained that the funds would be used to create a centralized, state-of-the-art website to showcase all tourism-related information about Hart County and the City of Hartwell. The estimated cost of the professionally developed website

is \$12,000, with a recommended 3-way split for the matching funds between the County, City, and Chamber of Commerce at \$2,000 each, with the remaining \$6,000 from grant funds. As discussion ensued, Councilman Hicks stated that he preferred the City's current website be enhanced rather than building a new site. Following discussion, a motion was made by Councilman David Little to approve the \$2,000 City's match for the development of a new website. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield. As the Mayor called for the vote, motion failed by a vote of 4 to 2, with Councilmen Gordon, Hicks, Senkbeil, and Evans opposing, and Councilmembers Mayfield and Little in favor.

Mayor and Council heard a presentation from Bishop Craig Pender and Mr. Terry Jones of Pre-Paid Legal Services, Inc. regarding identity theft protection legal services provided by their company through Palmetto Risk Management Group. Mr. Jones asked for approval to allow his company to offer city employees their services on a voluntary basis at a cost of approximately 87¢ per day per employee. As Mayor Beasley explained that the City Finance Officer had no more slots for payroll deductions, Mr. Jones stated that employees could get the services on their own without payroll deductions. Following discussion, Councilman Gordon moved to allow the City Manager to pursue this request as he sees fit with the department heads, city employees, and financial officer. He further stated that he was not recommending anything nor was he recommending that Council recommend anything. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilman Gordon and carried unanimously to continue supporting the Archway Project and approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the participants in the Hart County Archway Partnership.

Mayor and Council heard the first reading of Ordinance No. 2009-04 concerning an amendment to the Animal Control Ordinance. As the Mayor reviewed sections of the Ordinance, he expressed his dissatisfaction with certain provisions of the Ordinance, stating that the Ordinance punished honest people who own animals. Councilman Little replied that the Ordinance penalizes people who are not responsible. Following extensive discussion, a motion was made by Councilman Little to hold a work session to discuss the elements of the Ordinance further. Motion was seconded by Councilman Hicks and carried unanimously.

Mayor and Council heard the first reading of Ordinance No. 2009-05 concerning cable rights-of-way.

A motion was made by Councilman Little, seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield and carried unanimously to accept an agreement with Penn Credit Corporation for debt collection services on delinquent accounts. This debt collection service is made available through the Georgia Municipal Association.

Upon recommendation of the Finance Officer, a motion was made by Councilwoman Mayfield to approve the closure of the Streetscape Project Account at First Citizens Bank and transfer the remaining \$25,656.38, plus interest, to the Economic Development Account. Motion was seconded by Councilman Evans and carried unanimously. This account closure is due to the completion of the Phase II Streetscape Project.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield and carried unanimously to adopt Resolution No. 09-07-06, contesting population projections made by the University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government. The contested projections are due to

several large discrepancies discovered between the Institute's projections and the current projections in the Comprehensive Land Use Plans for the City of Hartwell and Hart County, as well as the existing Water Resource Management Plans. The projections are being developed by the Institute to be used by the State for various purposes, which impacts local government activities and programs.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilman Gordon and carried unanimously to adopt Resolution No. 09-07-06-1, amending the existing Downtown Development Authority (DDA) area boundaries in the city as shown on Exhibit "A" attached to the Resolution. As DDA Director Michael Crump was asked by the Mayor if it was the intent of the DDA to expand these boundaries for the purpose of taking over the Candler-Linder House located on West Johnson Street, his answer was, "not the intent at this time."

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield and carried unanimously to approve an application for a beer/wine license for Mr. James Williams of Dockside Seafood.

A motion was made by Councilman Little, seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield and carried unanimously to approve payment of an invoice from Process Control of Westminster in the amount of \$6,570.00 for repair of pumps at the Water Treatment Plant due to lightning damage. The City Manager also reported that this damage has been submitted to the insurance company.

A motion was made by Councilman Little, seconded by Councilwoman Mayfield and carried unanimously to authorize approximately 1200 used, and 115 new, ERT275 Sensus gas meter indexes as surplus property as requested by Gas Superintendent Audie Laviolette. The indexes are no longer used due to the City's new drive-by system. The City Manager also explained that the City already has an interested buyer for these meter indexes.

The City Manager presented Mayor and Council with a draft of a revised personnel policy for consideration for adoption. It was the recommendation of the City Manager that the policy be adopted by Resolution rather than Ordinance. He asked that Council review the draft policy and present him with feedback of any changes they wished to make.

A motion was made by Councilman Hicks, seconded by Councilman Gordon, and carried unanimously to authorize the City Manager to seek bids for the foundation work and erection of the Fire Department's fire tower.

Mayor Beasley reported that he had received requests for a crosswalk in front of Strickland Funeral Home on Cleveland Avenue. The City Manager stated that certain criteria had to be met even though this was an off-system of the Department of Transportation, but he would look into the request further.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Turner
City Clerk

