

## **MINUTES**

A Regular Meeting of Walterboro City Council was held at City Hall on Tuesday, August 25, 2015 at 6:15 P.M., with Mayor Bill Young presiding.

**PRESENT WERE:** Mayor Bill Young, Council Members: Jimmy Syfrett, Paul Siegel, Tom Lohr, Bobby Bonds, James Broderick and Judy Bridge. City Manager Jeff Molinari, City Clerk Betty Hudson and City Attorney George Cone were also present. There were approximately 16 persons present in the audience.

There being a quorum present, Mayor Young called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Council Member Syfrett gave the invocation and Council Member Siegel led the pledge of allegiance to our flag.

### **PUBLIC INPUT ON AGENDA ITEMS:**

There were no public comments or questions on agenda items.

### **PRESENTATION:**

1. Center for Heirs Property Preservation, Ms. Tish Lynn, Resource Development Coordinator

Ms. Lynn thanked Council for the opportunity to speak before Council. She stated that she works for the Center for Heirs Property Preservation and has lived in the Charleston area since 1980. She said, I have raised two children in South Carolina and have a passion for this state. I have a passion for this work. The Center for Heirs Property has been doing its work for 10 years, funded by the Ford Foundation. There were lots of problems in the rural communities, but what kept coming up on the part of landowners was heirs' property. She stated that heirs' property can be so easily lost and much of it has been lost in growth and development in South Carolina, especially along the coast, which is under pressure more. It can be lost easily, because the laws don't favor it. If any heir can sell his or her own percentage of ownership, no matter how small, to someone else, then that someone else can force the sale of the entire property, and of course, it can be purchased as a whole. The only law that exists that can help that family at that point, is that they have a year to raise the money to buy it back with interest.

Ms. Lynn informed Council that the Center for Heirs Property provides an education about heirs property, about the risks of owning it this way, about the rights and responsibilities of heirs property owners. We provide the legal help which most of these families cannot afford to obtain clear title to the land and to keep it. If families want to sell their land, our mission is to help those who want to keep it. Our mission is to help those who don't have the resources and want to keep their family land. We have cleared 130 titles to family land, which has a taxed assessed value of \$6.7 million. We serve 7 counties - Georgetown, the Tri-County, Colleton, Jasper and Beaufort. In 2013 we started another part of work which is called the sustainable forestry program. Part of our legal work is prevention, where we have will's clinics, and come into the community when we are asked to come. We write simple wills, so that owners can at least protect their percentage of ownership and pass it onto whom they want to get it in the family, so that upon their death, it does not split even more among all the heirs. At least it protects that part of the ownership. We do education as part of prevention, to let people know that it is a risky way to own the land.

We were funded in 2013 to start a sustainable forestry program and that will be completed at the end of September. It was for us to provide education on sustainable forestry practices for families owning a minimum 10 acres of forest land across our

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service area. We were asked to help 25 families and we have helped 40 families, who collectively own 4,000 acres of forest land. So, these 40 families, all of them developed conservation sustainable forestry program plans for their land long term to 5, 10, 15 and even 30 years out, so that it is actually going to become an income producing asset to these families for generations to come. They have also been able to apply for and gain more than \$300,000 worth of cost share reimbursement from the USDA Program that provide this kind of financial assistance to families who are putting in to place good conservation and sustainable forestry practices. They get cost share reimbursement to pay them back. This is a great product to grow on your land.

Ms. Lynn reported that there are at least 47,000 acres of heirs property in the 7 counties we serve. In Colleton alone, there is over 11,000 acres of heirs property.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The Minutes of the August 11, 2015 Regular Meeting were approved as submitted on the motion of Council Member Bridge, seconded by Council Member Siegel with all members voting in favor.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

There was no Old Business before Council.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Ordinance # 2015-08. An Ordinance to Amend Ordinance # 2015-03, So As to Set the Local Option Sales Tax Credit Factor in the Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Budget, **First Reading**

City Manager Molinari told Council that the City needs to set its Local Option Sales Tax Credit Factor. He said, as you remember there is a basic formula to get that number. What we do is take our anticipated local option sales tax collections divide that by the total appraised value of properties inside the City, and that gives us our Sales Tax Credit Factor. Mr. Molinari pointed out that the City did not get this information from the County until July, and that is why this ordinance is before you tonight. This is the number we will give to the County that will be factored into the property tax bills that go out in the fall.

A motion was made by Council Member Lohr, seconded by Council Member Broderick, giving first reading approval to Ordinance # 2015-08, being: An Ordinance to Set the Local Option Sales Tax Credit Factor in the Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Budget. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Consideration of Bids Received to Purchase New Wheel Loader with Tink Claw for Public Works Department

Next Council reviewed bids submitted to purchase a new wheel loader with a Tink Claw: Bids received were received as follows:

1. Blanchard Machinery Co. CAT Model 914 Wheel Loader \$120,906.00
2. Flint Equipment Co. John Deere 444K Wheel Loader \$135,100.00
3. Hills Machinery Co. Case 521 FZ Bar Wheel Loader \$138,259.14

City Manager Molinari reminded Council that during the budget process, the City discussed the need for some new yard debris removal equipment for the Public Works Department, and in the budget, City Council allocated \$123,000.00 for the purchase of a new wheel loader with a tink claw.

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Mr. Molinari stated that staff is recommending that we purchase the wheel loader with a tink claw from Blanchard Machinery. Walterboro, SC, in the amount of \$120,896.00 which is \$2,104.00 less than budgeted.

A motion was made by Council Member Syfrett, seconded by Council Member Siegel to approve the low bidder, Blanchard Machinery, for the purchase of a wheel loader with a tink claw in the amount of \$120,896.00. The motion passed unanimously.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

There were no Committee Reports given.

**CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:**

The Mayor then entertained a motion to enter into an Executive Session. Council Member Bonds So Moved and Council Member Broderick seconded the motion. All in favor. None opposed. Motion carried. The Mayor announced that the meeting will convene into an Executive Session for:

- 1) A Discussion of Matters Concerning the Provision of Services Encouraging Location of Industry Served by the Public Body.
- 2) A Personnel Matter Related to Board and Commission Appointments.

The meeting then convened into an Executive Session.

At approximately 7:09 P.M., a motion was made by Council Member Lohr to exit Executive Session and return to Open Session. Council Member Broderick seconded the motion. All in favor. None opposed. Motion carried.

The meeting returned to Open Session, and a motion was made by Council Member Lohr to appoint Benjamin Scott Cook to the Historic Preservation Commission and George Feild to the Economic Development Commission. Council Member Syfrett seconded the motion. All in favor, None opposed. Motion carried.

There being no further business to consider, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Council Member Bridge, seconded by Council Member Siegel and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:10 P.M. Notice of this meeting was distributed to all local media and posted on the City's website and the City Hall bulletin board at least twenty-four hours prior to meeting time.

Respectfully,

Betty J. Hudson  
City Clerk

**APPROVED: September 8, 2015**