

Walterboro City Council
Regular Meeting
February 9, 2010

MINUTES

A Regular Meeting of Walterboro City Council was held at City Hall on Tuesday, February 9, 2010 at 6:15 P.M. with Mayor Bill Young presiding.

PRESENT WERE: Mayor Bill Young, Council Members: Dwayne Buckner, Randy Peters, Charles Lucas, Ted Parker, Franklin Smalls and Tom Lohr. City Manager Jeff Lord, City Clerk Betty Hudson, City Attorney George Cone and Attorney Ashley Amundson were also present. There were approximately 22 persons present in the audience at the meeting.

There being a quorum present, the Mayor called the meeting to order.

Council Member Smalls gave the invocation and Council Member Lucas led the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag.

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments on agenda items.

PUBLIC INPUT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Ms. Marsha Johnson, a city resident, asked the following questions regarding the agenda:

- 1) With regard to the Projects Update Report, she asked City Manager Lord if the update would include what Council discussed at its work session. Mr. Lord responded "no". He said, what I did last year was a "concluding" presentation, and then at the following Council Meeting, I did a government "going forward" presentation, so that will be covered at the next Council Meeting.
- 2) She asked if it were possible to get a copy of Mr. Lord's Power Point presentation. Mr. Lord said a copy of his presentation will be available online on the City's website. Last year, it was also available online.
- 3) With regard to the discussion of potential uses of CDBG funds, Ms. Johnson asked if these were funds already secured by the city or funds that the city is looking to secure? Mayor Young responded that this is the prioritization of funds.
- 4) Ms. Johnson asked if the public would be able to look at the proposed budget before the Public Hearing is held and where will it be available? City Manager Lord responded that the proposed budget will be available for the public on June 4 at City Hall, and the public hearing will be held June 8.
- 5) In regard to the Rice Festival, Ms. Johnson said, since you (the city) are exempting the people who are participating in the Rice Festival from business licenses, are you also planning to extend that to the local merchants? Will they be exempted for the days of the Rice Festival? Mr. Lord responded, "no" that has not been our practice in the past. These are vendors that are coming for the Rice Festival, in conjunction with the Rice Festival, sanctioned by the Rice Festival Committee. Ms. Johnson then asked, so there is no similar benefits extended to the local merchants? Mr. Lord responded, only those participating in the Rice Festival.
- 6) Ms. Johnson then questioned the closing of Washington Street from Jefferies Blvd down Hargo Hill on Friday morning until Saturday afternoon for the Rice Festival. She asked, is that usually necessary? Mayor Young responded, we are probably going to ask Council to give them the right to do that. I don't think we have closed the Hargo Hill on Friday morning in the past., and probably won't close it this time. I don't know what time it needs to be closed for the fireworks preparations or what kind of safety issues would be around the fireworks, but that would be the only reason to close it. We think that might even be a typo and they really meant to ask to close the street

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from Saturday morning until Saturday afternoon. However, in the event that they need that area, we would probably approve it and if they don't need to, then it won't be closed.

- 7) Regarding the Guardian Ad Litem Program, Ms. Johnson said, you are saying that child abuse has increased dramatically in our city, I am just wondering if they (Ms. Judith Brodie and Ms. Linda Koehler) would speak to that so that people will know what they are facing and what the children are facing. Mayor Young responded that this will be done under New Business, if they wish.

PRESENTATION:

1. Projects Update - City Manager Jeff Lord

Mr. Lord announced that the City began projects updates last year, starting with the first Council Meeting after the retreat. This is a review of last year, the successes we've had, and some of challenges that we've had. At the next Council Meeting we will talk about going forward, listing some of the initiatives that Council has identified.

With the assistance of a Power Point presentation, Mr. Lord identified the goals set by Council for the year 2009 and the results achieved. Some of the highlights of his presentation are as follows:

1) Code Enforcement Officer. This position was budgeted. That person was hired and has now been promoted to Building/Code Inspector.

2) Building Inspection Software. Staff is pursuing some Building Inspection software. We found that our hardware was not up to par. So, last year, we concentrated on improving the computer systems in our Planning and Codes Department.

3) Comprehensive Underground Wiring. In regard to the goal of pursuing some comprehensive underground wiring, the City has conducted talks with SCE&G in conjunction with the tree trimming. SCE&G has presented a plan for an initial phase of underground wiring.

4) Economic Development Function. This department was created, staffed and hired. Mr. Hank Amundson has been in this position for several months.

5) A Retail Market Study has been completed, presented to Council and is available on the website. This is for anybody who wants to know what opportunities there may be in the City of Walterboro to do a retail business.

6) Landscaping of the Exit 53 & Exit 57 Adopt-an-Interchange. This has been a long time project for 4 of 5 years now. Noticeable construction for landscape improvements will start in the next two weeks. We put the taps in last week. So, that project is finally underway.

7) The Design for the I-95 Loop Project. Staff has the surveys drafted and expect to send those out with the next water bills. We have already engaged SCDOT LPAA in the process to facilitate funding.

8) All neighborhoods are served by parks and playgrounds. As you know, the City and the county split the responsibilities on what was covered by the Recreation Commission. We took over the parks within the City. We have started cleaning up the parks to include landscaping and graffiti removal. We have updated and will replace signage in the parks in the next two weeks. The signs will no

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longer say "Recreation Commission", but will say "City of Walterboro". We had a public meeting last week on the park master plan. Surveys were sent out with the water bills and we had a good response. 166 responses were received.

9) Youth Advisory Commission. This commission has been created and we are currently recruiting members.

10) Improvements to Ireland Creek. This is another long standing project. This project has been listed as priority No. 3 for funding by the Corps of Engineers. We are third on their list in the state. This is a funding line that the Corps had not received funds for in 3 years. When they do receive funding, we will be 3rd. So, it's good to be just back on their list.

11) Great Swamp Sanctuary Invasive Species Rehabilitation. This project is underway. Our contractor went in and did some selective spraying last month and over the next three years, they will be cleaning out those invasive species, mainly along the asphalt trail on Detreville Street to Washington Street.

12) Welcome Center. The Welcome Center staff and operations were assumed by the City. This was done immediately at the beginning of the new budget year. This transition is complete and has been successful.

13) Discovery Center. The design documents are complete for the Discovery Center. We have all our permits and the land. The only thing we require is funding. We are trying to get this funded as much as possible through outside sources. Absent funding, this project is ready to go.

14) North Lemacks Revitalization Committee. This committee was re-established and has met. It has been a little while since they had their last meeting, but that's mainly because we have been waiting for the fall round before the funding can come through.

15) Security Cameras in the Great Swamp Sanctuary. The cameras are installed and working.

16) Bells Highway Pump Station Upgrade. We have received funding for this project and it is under construction.

17) The Wastewater Treatment Plant Capacity. There was a technical memo presented by our engineers which indicated that 2018 is when the City would need to think about expanding the capacity of our treatment plant.

18) Phase II of the System Rehabilitation Project. The City sought funding. That project has been let and is currently underway. We have finished the TVing and hopefully this week or next week, we will actually start rehabing the lines.

19) Waterline Extensions. Rivers Street and Henderson Streets waterline extensions are currently under construction and should be complete in two weeks. We are still seeking funding for the Hampton Street water line, which does not qualify for CDBG funding. The Witsell Street water line in front of Lincoln Street Apartments has also been completed.

20) Assessment of the Downtown Water Tank. The engineers looked at what it would take to replace the tank. We also looked at putting up another tank somewhere else, but our best option was to look at doing system upgrades, such as waterline looping and pump improvements, so that we can do other things that not only replaces the tank, but also improves other areas as well. One aspect of this is

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the Francis Street waterline looping, which is a project that we are seeking funding for through CDBG currently.

21) Hiers Corner Waterline Looping Project. This project is complete. It connects from the water tank on Bells Highway, goes all the way down to Hiers Corner and comes into the back of Forest Hills. This fixes the problem we had with fire flow in Forest Hills.

22) Highway 63 and I-95 Pump Stations. The Highway 63 Pump Station is currently under construction. The I-95 Pump Station is complete.

23) Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades. This was budgeted and bid. We have the bids and are currently reviewing them for submission to Council.

24) Pine Needle Pump Station Upgrade. This is complete.

25) Gravity Line to the New Quick Jobs Center. The line is substantially complete. The line is done, it's flowing. They are no longer using the sludge pond and we are currently remediating it, so that they can use it as a retention pond.

26) Community Outreach Program in the Police Dept. This has been implemented and there is an ongoing process of refining it to make it a better program.

27) Patrol Laptop Upgrades. This is to enable our officers to run reports, do checks and other things in their cars. At the last meeting, Council approved the contract for this software.

28) Central Business District. The sustainability study of the downtown trees and landscaping is underway. We have done the surveys and had a public meeting, so we are anticipating a recommendation for our designers. The Downtown Kiosk has been completed and updated. I am pleased to say, when you have new businesses come downtown that means you have to update your kiosk. Expansion of the white lights in the Central Business District has also been done. This is expanding those lights that go across the top of the buildings on Washington Street. The lights are now from Lucas Street to Walter Street. The Buy Local Campaign has also been implemented. We have the bags and the flyers out, the billboards up and have been working with both newspaper for print media and also some things on the radio. We have had great feedback from this success.

29) Social Media. We are now on Facebook and Twitter. We have not yet advertised either program, but we have 675 fans. We will soon have a link to it from our website. We wanted to have a soft start, and this is the response we have received with no advertising. We are reaching another whole level of citizens that we don't usually reach like young people. 50% of persons involved in this are in the 25 to 44 age range. A lot of high school students are participating. I think 66% of them are female.

30) Comprehensive Plan. We are working on this and expect it to be done very quickly. The Planning Commission is reviewing the final draft.

31) Curbside Recycling. This is something we have been trying to work with the county on. The logistics of the situation make it so that it has to be something that we work together on. Our last conversation with them was that they were seeking the proposals for single stream recyclables, so if they get that done, we will be able to pick it up. It is an ongoing joint project.

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32) Sidewalk Project . We have sought funding and we have not been successful yet, but we're still seeking funding on improving our sidewalks.

33) Recodification of the Code. This has been completed.

Concluding the presentation, Mr. Lord stated that of the 40 projects he has listed, 21 are complete or substantially complete. 10 of the remaining projects we expect to be done before the end of the fiscal year, and the remaining 9 projects do not have an expected finish date or it's long enough out where it is hard to put a date on it.

The Mayor announced that at Council's last meeting, a request was received to hear a report on what the City was doing to address community violence. So, we have asked that this item be put on the agenda. Mr. Lord will now give us that report.

2. Presentation - Community Violence Reduction - City Manager Jeff Lord

Mr. Lord began by stating that these are just things that are different from our normal operation procedures. They are "new things" we are doing:

1) We have hired a community resource officer, with the assistance of COPS Grant Program through the Justice Department. This person's responsibility is to coordinate the crime watch areas. Work with the communities and organize the community outreach program that we already have in place. Two current crime watch groups we are working on developing are: Padgett Loop and North Lemacks.

2) We have adapted the community contact program to spend more time on each contact and resolve those issues personally. This is to resolve those problems and give feedback to that person.

3) We have reinstalled the field interview program at night. If we see somebody out at night, the officers are going to stop and talk to them, just to let them know we are there if they need us. So, it's just a friendly contact so the people will know that we are out there.

4) The Public Safety and Code Enforcement Departments are working together to enforce laws. This is a coordinated effort where our public safety Officers have access to maybe a search warrant, and when they identify a possible code enforcement issue, they will bring our code enforcement in so we can address it. So things we normally wouldn't be able to see, we would have access to because of our public safety actions.

5) We have been working with SLED to pursue outstanding warrants that we have outside of our jurisdiction.

6) We have worked with SCE&G to install additional lighting in the Gerideau, McDaniel Street area. This has been a successful endeavor. The additional street lighting provides an extra level of safety for the people in the neighborhood.

7) We are working with our Legislative Delegation to help improve some of the laws to help enforcement and prevention. Examples are: The State Sentencing Committee has been looking at reforming the state's sentencing laws. We have been trying to talk to them about looking at revocation of bail. For example, if somebody is out on bail and they commit a crime, they should not get bail again. Their original bail should be revoked. So, being accused of a crime or arrested for a crime while on bail should be a revocation of bail. Representative Bill Bowers has proposed bills for both of these, the bail revocation and a proposed bill to make "drive-by shooting" a crime. Shooting is a crime, but this makes it a separate crime, defined as "drive-by shooting".

8) We have been working with other jurisdictions that have had success fighting the same problems. Most notably, North Charleston is an example.

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9) We are continuing to work with schools and churches in mentoring programs.

Council Member Buckner then asked the City Manager, what collaboration efforts do we have with the county with regard to the two entities working together to curb some of the violence? How well are these two departments working together? City Manager Lord responded that SLED allows us to get out and serve some of our warrants, and we have been doing the same with the county. They have also been serving in that role. SLED has assigned people specifically for us and they are available for that purpose, and we have done the same thing with the county. Their ongoing investigations are tied with ours and there is cross-communications between those. They have more instances than we have and we have been trying to assist them when we can. SLED has been that coordinating entity.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

The Minutes of the January 26, 2010 Public Hearing and Regular Meeting were approved on the motion of Council Member Buckner, seconded by Council Member Lucas and passed with all members voting in favor.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Discussion of Potential Uses of CDBG Funds.

Michelle Knight was present from Lowcountry Council of Governments to answer questions on this agenda item. The Mayor asked about the top three priorities. He asked, when you have three top priorities, does it matter if you select one or the other, will they be considered the same way? Ms. Knight said, whatever you are going to apply for needs to be tied to one of your top three priorities.

The Mayor asked Ms. Knight to explain the difference between the Housing and Village Renaissance and Downtown Revitalization and how those differ with CDBG funds.

Ms. Knight responded, let's start off by saying that housing in its truest form is just having a housing project where you do rehab work or affordable housing or new construction. That's the only activity you're doing. It's not a CDBG project anymore. What you have to do is what they call a Village Renaissance Project, where you go in and you do some housing, you do clearance of lots, maybe acquisition of lots to put new housing in and do in-fill, some street paving, and things like that. It's multiple activities under one project. The difference between it and downtown revitalization is, when you talk about downtown revitalization, you are talking about working right in your business center. You are doing things like streetscape work and some of the lighting that you've talked about. It's all done in your business center. The Village Renaissance projects are done outside the business center. The difference is whether you are working strictly in your commercial center or working in a residential neighborhood.

The Mayor then asked Ms. Knight to explain how CDBG funds could be used in a public safety aspect. Ms. Knightly noted that these are projects like police substations in low-income neighborhoods, which can include building one or acquiring a property that could be converted into one, or a multiple purpose center where you have maybe the police substation, a mentoring program in place for youth, where there is an after school assistance program for homework. This is a place for youth to go to keep them out of trouble, with programs in place to operate in the facility. Some of the money can be used actually for the services themselves

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and not necessarily bricks and mortar, like the crime watch. With that you can only use a small portion of money for that, and you got to commit to continuing on with the program once the money is gone. For example, if you wanted a resource officer in a neighborhood and wanted to use some of the CDBG money to help fund that position, you'd have to promise that you are not going to make the position go away once the grant period is over, but that it would be a sustainable position in the budget at the end of the grant period. In a project, only 15% of your money could go toward the services. Primarily, what CDBG likes to see you do is use their money for bricks and mortar type things, not programs.

Council Member Parker then asked, if we found something in a neighborhood that would act as a substation, could we rent this building instead of building a new building? Could CDBG money go towards that? Ms. Knight responded, you'd have to buy it or have a long term lease agreement where you would have control over the property, because of any work that you do on the building. So, they are talking about a 99 year lease or own it. If you can lease something for 99 years, you might as well own it.

Council Member Peters then asked, are you saying that we are more likely to get more funds to build substations than we would hiring resource officers? Ms. Knight explained that CDBG funds are typically used for bricks and mortar work. You are not going to be able to do a project where all you do is hire a resource officer. Any project that you do, whether it's a Village Renaissance Project or whether it's an Infrastructure Project in a low income neighborhood, they are going to require a public safety component. You are going to have to be able to tell the things you are doing in that area from a public safety standpoint, but may not include what you are actually using CDBG funds to pay for. For example, if the Lincoln Apartment Project had gone in this round, there would have needed to be some public safety component for that neighborhood. Something else that you are doing besides "putting in a waterline". It could be with CDBG funds that you are asking to do that or it could be things you are doing with your own resources, but you have to be able to talk about a public safety component as well.

Council Member Buckner, asked, what are some of the other options under public safety we have outside of just bricks and mortar. What other projects have you seen? Ms. Knight responded, this is new, this is the first year they are doing it. So, if you have some ideas about other things you'd like to try to pursue, provided they are not solely programming things, we can talk with Columbia about that to see if we can determine if it would fit into what they are looking for. The things that I have mentioned specifically were the substations, multiple purpose centers, security lighting, and security cameras. Those are bricks and mortar type things. However, I don't think you would have a \$500,000 project only on putting in security cameras, like programming or lighting or substations.

Council Member Peters then said, if we were to ask for CDBG funds to build a new public safety department, would those funds be available to help us do that? Ms. Knight responded, not for a new public safety department. It can't be for an office of general government. If you told me you needed a new police department office or a new fire department office, that's not the purpose. The purpose is that you have a growing city and you have low income areas that need a presence, and in order to do that, you need those substations added.

Mayor Young added, and as long as it's in our top three, we don't have to pursue them in any particular order. Ms. Knight replied, you just have to give the reasoning. If it's not number 1, you have to give the reason as to why you are not pursuing number 1.

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Council Member Smalls asked, if we list our priorities 1, 2 and 3, and then pursue no. 3 first and then go back to number 1, what would be our chances in doing that? Ms. Knight responded, you can still do that. There are other places that have done that. There may be a very viable reason that number one can't be pursued immediately, even if it's the top need. For example, a community listed housing as number one. They didn't want to pursue a housing project immediately, because they were in the middle of doing a study. They couldn't feasibly get it done fast enough to pursue that first. So, they pursued a drainage project then they went back and pursued a housing project. You just have to state your reason. As long as it makes sense, it's fine.

Council Member Peters then asked if we specified "public facilities", would that allow us to build a public safety department? Ms. Knight responded, it's still the same thing. It's an operation of general government. The idea is not to use it for the general operation of government. It would be like going and asking Columbia to help fund the construction of City Hall. They are not going to do that. Public facilities would be things like libraries and workforce development centers.

A motion was made by Council Member Buckner to approve the City's priority needs for CDBG funding as presented, which are:

- 1) Public Safety
- 2) Infrastructure
- 3) Housing and Village Renaissance
- 4) Downtown revitalization
- 5) Public facilities

Council Member Peters seconded the motion. In discussing the motion, Council Member Smalls asked how many areas can we apply for in one year? Ms. Knight said, that all depends on how fast we can get the two we have closed. Theoretically, the Pine Needle Pump Station Project should close in the very near future. Once that closes, you will have two slots open. On the Lincoln Project, once we get the amendment approved that we are waiting on Columbia right now, it should close before the fall round. If everything works right and we move fast enough, you might be eligible to put three new projects in over the next 12 months.

Council Member Buckner then spoke on the "public safety" priority need. He said, I am speaking for myself that public safety is extremely important in the wake of what has happened in our city in the last couple of months and we are pinpointing on using these funds to help curb the violence. It is important for the community to know that we are serious about doing what we need to do in order to make our city a safer place to be.

The motion to approve the CDBG funding priorities as presented then passed with all members voting in favor.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Proclamation No. 2010-02, Designating Guardian Ad Litem Child Advocate Day.**

Ms. Judith Pye-Brodie, Event Planner and Ms. Linda Koehler, Coordinator, were present on behalf of the Guardian Ad Litem Program. Ms. Brodie told the audience that the Guardian Ad Litem Program advocates for the rights of children. She said, all children have the natural born right to come into a family of love and caring and not be abused. This program advocates for the rights for those abused children in our court system. What we are trying to do is on April 23 make the community aware of the child abuse that goes on in the community of Walterboro.

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A motion was made by Council Member Parker seconded by Council Member Lucas to adopt Proclamation No. 2010-02 as submitted. The Mayor then read the proclamation in its entirety into the records. The motion passed unanimously. A copy of said proclamation is attached as part of these minutes.

2. Consideration of 2009-2010 Budget Calendar

A motion was made by Council Member Peters, seconded by Council Member Smalls, to approve the 2010-2011 Budget Calendar as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Consideration of 2010 Rice Festival Requests

Mr. Jimmy Trippe, present on behalf of the Colleton County Rice Festival Committee, asked Council to approve the 2010 Rice Festival request as presented along with the parade permit request.

Council Member Parker moved, and Council Member Lucas seconded the motion to approve the Rice Festival request and parade permit as submitted. In discussing the motion, Council Member Peters asked if Hargo Hill would be closed on Friday morning? Mayor Young stated, he did not believe that in the past that the City had closed that section of the street for that long. He said, if Council wants to approve it, then we'll approve it and then they (the Rice Festival) will leave it open unless they have to close it for safety reasons. Council Member Lucas added, we should be able to get updates between now and the Rice Festival. The motion to approve the Rice Festival request as submitted was then approved unanimously.

There were no Committee Reports given.

Before adjourning the meeting, Mayor Young announced that the "Mayor's Round Table" would not be held this month due to the state Municipal Association Meeting.

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

Respectfully,

Betty J. Hudson
City Clerk

APPROVED: February 23, 2010