

HAHIRA CITY COUNCIL

2016 RETREAT

FEBRUARY 5, 2016

COMMUNITY CENTER

HAHIRA, GEORGIA

The Mayor and Council met for a Retreat on February 5, 2016 at the Community Center in Hahira, Georgia at 8:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Bruce Cain, Mayor Pro Tem Terry Benjamin, Councilman Mason Barfield and Councilman Patrick Warren. City Manager Jonathan Sumner, City Clerk Lisa Mashburn, PW Director Donnie Warren, Police Chief Terry Davis and Fire Chief Dwight Bennett. Councilman Kenneth Davis was not present.

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS:

City Manager Sumner reviewed the Mission and Vision statement for the City of Hahira and the values/goals. The strengths of the City are good schools, friendly small town atmosphere and low crime. We are in good financial condition, have good quality of water, quality of service and great location. We do have threats of encroachment from Valdosta/Lowndes County, inadequately planned growth, overburdened infrastructure and closure of MAFB to mention a few.

FINANCIAL OUTLOOK:

City Manager Sumner reviewed the 2016 General Fund Budget. The General Fund is the principal operating fund of the City. This fund is to account for all financial resources not otherwise accounted for in the Proprietary Fund. The General Fund is used to operate Administrative, Public Safety, Streets and other departments. The General fund is in good shape with liquid cash fund in excess of \$600,000, Sumner stated that we are in good financial position. We have a lot of options, we can increase our revenue and expenditures, use it for personnel or we can increase capital purchases. We also have the option for additional CD to increase the rainy day funds. We have 104 operating days in the rainy day fund. The Proprietary fund revenue and expenses was closer to the same this year. The Sanitation increased due to inert debris and tipping fees that increased. The proprietary fund has 54 days rainy day fund. The biggest issue is the bulk material, this cost the city more this year. We can increase the sanitation pick up fee by \$1.00 to defray the cost or we can charge a per-dump fee of \$10.00 per dump. This amount could be assessed on each resident's monthly bill after they visit the recycle center.

CAPITAL EQUIPMENT, FACILITIES AND PROPERTY:

Sumner discussed the capital purchases with SPLOST VII which started in 2014 and has a span of 6 years with anticipated collections of \$3,765,000. The actual estimated collection would be around \$3,129,067 which is 83% of the original estimate. He then reviewed the referendum areas for SPLOST VII. The largest portion of the SPLOST VII would be spent on the railroad property and new park area in the center of town.

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Chief Davis reviewed the Mission and Vision statement for the police department. He gave an updated short term goal list. He stated the short term goals as obtain new warrant system and replace in-car cameras and radars. He would seek funding to increase starting pay for officers which is currently \$10.00 per hour and he would like to increase to \$12.00 per hour. He stated the rate we are at now is one of the lowest in Georgia and that it is hard to recruit good officers. The average starting pay for certified officers in our area is \$28,200 to \$34,000. The Long term goals are to build new building to house the Police department, we are currently in a 900 square foot building that was built in 1971. We have limited space for records storage, no room for interviews/interrogations or to separate victims from suspects while working crimes. At a minimum we need 3 times the space we currently occupy. He stated some of the long term goals from last year have been met but we still need a larger building, full time investigator and full time probation officer. Chief Davis reviewed the chain of command and reviewed the growth chart for the City of Hahira which is a concern for the future. Chief Davis stated that we will do a BBQ at the end of the month for a community day.

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Chief Bennett stated that at present the fire department has funding to staff one firefighter on duty 24 hours a day with a second firefighter on duty on weekends from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. With our growing population and calls for service, not having adequate staffing in the evenings and nights is becoming difficult to ensure all emergency calls are handled properly and safely during these hours. Our goal is to correct this treat and add staff during these times. In 2017 the goals are to increase 24 hour staffed coverage, create 3-24 hour shifts and hire 3 full time firefighters. This would require an increase of the annual salary line item of approximately \$125,000. In 2018 the goal would be in construct fire station #2 and the cost of this is estimated at \$150,000. In 2019 he would like to hire a full time fire prevention officer/firefighter. This position would be used to conduct fire inspections, plan reviews and public safety education. For 2020 the goal would be to recruit a fulltime Captain position that would implement a dedicated training division to carry out daily training for staff and oversee the operations side of the department at a cost of \$35,000 per year.

PUBLIC WORKS:

PWD Warren said that the City has experienced an enormous growth in recent years. Public Works is prepared to face the challenges of a developing community by focusing on maintaining and improving the existing systems rather than expanding systems to serve future growth. We concentrate on blending our internal resources and responding to citizens in a timely manner. We need to find a way to manage the overflow of the ponds. We need to find a way to expand the ponds or remove the water. One possible solution is to put in another main lift station. Our main lift station is full during peak periods which would be a cost of 500,000. We have done Inflow & Infiltration but more is needed. We have sewer needs like a possible ultraviolet light system and the budget for that would be \$500,000. The long term goal of sewer capacity improvement would be to consider sewer to a new LAS (Spryfield) or sewer to the Little River (the cost would be 2 million dollars). It is recommended to re-evaluate this option in FY18 to see how existing rate increases impact collections. PWD Warren reviewed streets that need paving as Barfield Street, East Coleman, West Stanfill Street, North Hall Street and South Nelson Street. He also suggested rubber mulch for the City parks, it is safer and heavier than wood mulch. PWD Warren discussed salary increases for the department, paving the Public works mobilization area

and the Public Works Facility needs a new roof and improved ceilings. The break area known as the "John Franklin Retreat" needs to be torn down.

PWD Warren discussed the storm water management and MS4. We have spent \$40,000 as part of its MS4 permit designation from SPLOST funds, the permit will require inventory activities and other public education events and this impacted the sanitation line item by approximately \$3,000 with Amnesty Day in addition to other monitoring costs. As part of the MS4 we need to do infrastructure mapping, sidewalk improvements in areas of town and upgrade of the Community Center.

ADMINISTRATION:

City Manager Sumner said that the Admin Ongoing projects are file imaging, A-la-Carte Benefit System with short and long term disability and salary upgrades. The new website development is complete. The short term goals for 2016 are to reactivate Downtown Development Authority, code organization and adoption and rewrite the personnel policy. He stated that the Charter is on the new web site. The long term goals are to continue to work with property owners and GDOT on development of Hahira Interchange properties. Advance plans for redevelopment of downtown buildings and work with the Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority on the soccer fields in Hahira. We need to facilitate strategic planning to establish a comprehensive five-year plan both internally and externally, revitalize the Odom Building and work on a New City Center. In discussion regarding the Odom Building it was stated that we should donate the building to the DDA so that the DDA can receive low interest loans and grants that could renovate the building or perhaps attract an angel investor or interested business to finish out the building. We have capital project needs to secure facility for the Police department, this would provide more first floor space and larger Council chambers area for Executive Sessions. The City Center property was purchased and we have a master plan. This project will be divided into four phases.

Phase I: Demolition of the warehouse Phase II: Development of the Central Park Phase III: New City Hall and Phase IV: Back lot drainage improvements. This would probably be funded from SPOST VIII that will be decided in the next four years so this would all be 6 to 7 years out. The Mayor discussed the next step for the City Center would be to do an RFP and select architect. Sumner said that we need to update the cost of the City Center.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

City Manager Sumner asked if anyone had any other items that they would like to discuss.

Councilman Barfield said that he would like to see all the DDA information and City Center project information on the new website.

Councilman Warren said that he would like to see the Ethics Committee Appointments updated and the issue of the siren at the school fixed, when there is lightening in the area it goes off at night.

Councilman Warren asked the Chief of Police if he had any ideas on where to put the Police department. Chief Davis stated he knows long term it would be to put it in the City Center but for now the old Dollar General building would be good. He stated that this building would provide more office space, plenty of parking and the old Courthouse is at capacity we could move it down to the old Dollar General building.

Councilman Warren asked about speed bumps in areas where people fly down the road. It was stated that this was checked on in the past and the liability would go through the roof with GIRMA.

Councilman Benjamin said that he would like to continue to focus on training and salary study. This has been an issue for 7-8 years and it really needs to be considered.

Councilman Barfield said that the employees are on the front line and that our first priority should be our employees, the employees serve our customers.

The Mayor stated in closing that we need to work on the RFP for the City Center design, the employee raises and the lift station.

City Manager Sumner said that he appreciates your commitment and for coming today; upward and onward.

The Meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Mayor Bruce Cain

City Clerk Lisa Mashburn