

**HAHIRA CITY COUNCIL**

**WORKSESSION**

**FEBRUARY 2, 2015**

**6:30 P.M.**

**COURTHOUSE**

The Mayor and Council met for a Work session February 2, 2015 with Mayor Bruce Cain presiding.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Bruce Cain, Councils: Mason Barfield, Kenneth Davis, Terry Benjamin and Mayor Pro Tem Ralph Clendenin. City Manager Jonathan Sumner, Fire Chief Dwight Bennett, Police Chief Terry Davis, PWD Donnie Warren and City Clerk Lisa Mashburn.

**REVIEW/CORRECTIONS OF MINUTES:**

- A. JANUARY 5, 2015 WORK SESSION**
- B. JANUARY 8, 2015 COUNCIL MEETING**

The Mayor asked if anyone had any questions or concerns regarding the minutes. None noted.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

- A. WATER-SEWER RATE ORDINANCE (THIRD READING-CITY MANAGER)**

City Manager Sumner said as discussed before that this will be the third reading of the water-sewer ordinance and we will vote on Thursday night. He reviewed all the proposed changes to the quarterly rate increases, senior citizens discounts and no discounts for irrigation meters. The Mayor asked if anyone had any questions or concerns. None noted.

**REVIEW OF BILLS/BUDGET OVERAGES:**

The Mayor asked if anyone had any questions or concerns regarding the bills. None noted.

**DISCUSSIONS:**

- A. GMA ANNUAL CONVENTION (CITY MANAGER)**

City Manager Sumner stated that they have changes to the upcoming Savannah GMA Annual Convention. There will be several days that you can receive training this year. He stated that he would like to know who will be attending and the classes that they would like to take by Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. The Mayor, City Manager, Councilmember Davis and Councilmember Barfield would like to all attend the GMA Annual Convention.

- B. BILLBOARD (CITY MANAGER)**

City Manager Sumner stated that we have had a billboard on I-75 for several years now for advertisement of the town. He stated that the cost to leave the sign there would be a cost of \$3,000.00 for the year but that we have a credit that will make the cost for 2015 \$2,200.00. He stated that we have the funds in promotion BHT budget for advertisement. Mayor Pro Tem Clendenin asked if the businesses are paying any of this. The Mayor stated that they said

originally that they would help pay for it and then came back and said they wanted the City to pay for it. Councilmember Davis said that it is a general advertisement and that he wondered if it was effective at all. Councilmember Barfield said that he felt we need to come up with something witty to make people want to see what it is all about and also maybe add the information regarding our website to draw people in. City Manager Sumner said that he can work with the billboard people to have another design, redesign and what the additional cost would be. He stated that they will need a decision after the Thursday night meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Clendenin said that it all depends on the price.

**C. RAILROAD PROPERTY (CITY ATTORNEY)**

City Attorney Rob Plumb said that there was question of who owns the warehouse building on the railroad property that the City will purchase and it is BG Wetherington Farms. He gave a history of the building stating that in 1930 the deed was to Dr. Dixon Wallace and it was a lease with the railroad for dirt under the building. All deeds are for the building. In 1998 several tracks were sold to BG Wetherington Farms (Consolidated Building Warehouse) and the building is the property that was transferred. Whoever controls the property controls the building. City Manager Sumner ask what type of notification would the City have to give to BG Wetherington Farms. Plumb said that it would need to be a 30 day written notice. He said that the railroad does not own the building they have the land only and it is leased at \$2400.00 per year. City Manager Sumner said that the railroad has not had a need for the property. Mayor Pro Tem Clendenin asked what our financial responsibility is. Plumb said that they pay rent in July we terminate in June. Mayor Pro Tem Clendenin asked if we do not renew the lease does the tenant move the building. Plumb said the tenant can remove it or abandon it and he said the notice to terminate the lease would have to state to remove the building. He said that once you put them on notice then it is up to them what they do. He said once you have no right to the land then you have to take care of the building. Councilmember Barfield said that he felt we should confer with Wetherington Farms and approach in a way that they would want to move it in good faith and we can all move forward. Mayor Pro Tem Clendenin asked if anyone had talked to Fred Wetherington. The Mayor said no we were waiting to get clarification and then have a sit down with him. Councilmember Barfield said yes he thinks the next step should be to approach the Wetherington's. Mayor Pro Tem Clendenin asked if Attorney Plumb knew the price they paid, he said no all he knows is they paid \$1,000 transfer tax fee. The Mayor asked if anyone had any questions. None noted.

**DEPARTMENT REQUESTS:**

**A. SPRING CONFERENCE (CHIEF BENNETT)**

Chief Bennett said that he would like to attend the spring training in Savannah from April 26 to April 29<sup>th</sup>. He stated that it is 40 hours of Executive recertification training. The cost is \$200.00 for training and the room is \$149.00 per night.

**B. SAFER GRANT (CHIEF BENNETT)**

Chief Bennett said that he would like to apply for the SAFER grant. He stated that it is a staffing grant and that it would pay 100% of the salaries if awarded the grant. He said that he wanted to let everyone know about the grant before he writes the grant. He stated that it pays for 2 years of salaries. This would be about \$35,000-\$40,000 for 1 person and \$125,000-\$130,000 for 3 positions and that we would have to start paying the salaries in 2018. City Manager Sumner

said that we would have to raise the millage rate 2 mills to cover the cost. Mayor Pro Tem Clendenin said that he feels we are trying to be Valdosta. He said we are the most expensive city to live in and that we can't keep spending money, we have to conserve. Councilmember Davis asked the City Manager if we take on this \$125,000 for one year are there any other alternatives? Anywhere else to get the money. No said City Manager Sumner. Councilmember Benjamin asked how many lives have been lost in the last 25 years. Chief Bennett said 8 lives, 3 in the last few years. He state this did not end with your mentality. What is the future of Hahira? He stated that this is 3 years away and nobody know the future, we do not know where anyone will be then. We cannot put up a fence around Hahira. Councilmember Benjamin said that his take on the Fire department went from no existence to where we are now. The Citizens of District I have had improvements and it is the goal to accommodate our citizens. No one wants to raise anything but the citizens want certain services. The citizens would be surprised at what we do have and this is not good enough. We need to improve the quality of life and weigh the benefits to the Citizens of Hahira. We should look at what we are accomplishing to make sure the citizens are safe as possible. The cycle cannot continue, we have a band aid fix to get the 24 hour coverage that we need now. It is doable for now until we have another fix and this would make it free for a few years. Councilmember Davis asked what the population is now. It is about 3,500. We have one full-time employee and 14 part time employees in the Fire department with no volunteers. Mayor Pro Tem Clendenin said that he thought we had volunteers. Bennett stated no that the training is 96 hours and people just cannot do it. Mayor Pro Tem Clendenin said that we need to put together a 5 to 10 year plan for the water/sewer, Police Department and Fire Department because we do not have a plan. Councilmember Barfield said what I would like to see before we commit is how does our fire department add up against other fire departments with the Cities of the same size. Chief Bennett said right now we are on the back of the bus. Barfield asked if this is a grant that is offered each year. Councilmember Davis said that he would love to see it happen but that we need other ways to fund it. He said that he feels that it is our responsibility to find a way to fund it and he thanked Chief Bennett for bringing it to us. City Manager Sumner said that if anyone has another revenue source that he welcomes your analysis and input.

**C. JUVENILE FIRE-SETTER REHAB PROGRAM (CHIEF BENNETT)**

Chief Bennett said that this is a program that we started 3 or 4 years ago with the City of Valdosta and the department of juvenile justice to work with juveniles instead of sentencing. He stated that it is an educational arm for fire safety and is quality control. Chief Bennett said that the problem that we run into is we have people who do not live in the City that want the service, it is mostly from the County. He said that it takes three of the staff to do which is at a cost of about \$620.00. He said that it can cost us a lot if we continue to do it. He said that he thinks that we should try to recoup a charge for the service. He stated that it is a sentence not probation. Councilmember Barfield said that we need to charge across the board \$625.00 per person to cover the cost. Attorney Plumb said that we would have to put it in policy and then have a conversation with the Judge to inform the court but beyond that would be all we need to do.

**D. PUBLIC WORKS ADMIN BUILDING FLOOR-SPLOST VII (PWD WARREN)**

PWD Warren said that the floor at the Public Works building needs to be replaced along with the floor in the bathroom that would need to have a new sub floor. He stated that we received two bids with the low bid of \$1800.00 from Mr. Jose Huerta.

**E. HUDDLE HOUSE SEWER LINE (PWD WARREN)**

PWD Warren said that the manhole has settled and that we have one pipe holding 11 inches of water across Highway 122 and that it is a problem that needs to be fixed. He stated that the price was outrageous to fix it and that we have been running maintenance to control the problem.

**F. SUMMER CONVERENCE (CHIEF DAVIS)**

Chief Davis said that this mandated training and is set for July 19-23. The cost is \$375.00 for training and that it is a budgeted item.

**G. CITY CLERK/FINANCE CLERK SUMMER CONFERENCE (CITY CLERK)**

The City Clerk/Finance Clerk training is set for June 26 to 30<sup>th</sup> at the GMA annual convention and the City Clerk and Finance Clerk would like to attend. The cost of the training is \$600.00 per person.

**SET FEBRUARY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA:**

**FEBRUARY COUNCIL AGENDA**

-BILLBOARD

-SAFER GRANT

**FEBRUARY CONSENT AGENDA**

-GMA ANNUAL CONVENTION

-FIRE SPRING CONFERENCE

-JUVENILE FIRE-SETTER REHAB PROGRAM

-PUBLIC WORKS ADMIN BUILDING FLOOR SPLOST VII-MR. HUERTA, \$1,800 LOW BID

-POLICE SUMMER CONFERENCE

-CITY CLERK/FINANCE CLERK SUMMER CONFERENCE

**ADJOURN.**

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**Mayor Bruce Cain**

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**City Clerk Lisa Mashburn**