**HAHIRA CITY COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**SEPTEMBER 4, 2014**

**7:30 P.M.**

**COURTHOUSE**

Mayor and Council met for a council meeting September 4, 2014 at the Courthouse with Mayor Bruce Cain presiding.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Bruce Cain, Councils: Mason Barfield, Kenneth Davis and Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin. City Manager Jonathan Sumner, Police Chief Terry Davis, Chief Dwight Bennett, PWD Donnie Warren and City Clerk Lisa Mashburn. Councilmember Ralph Clendenin was not present.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Bruce Cain

**ESTABLISH QUORUM:** Mayor Bruce Cain

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mayor Bruce Cain

**INVOCATION:** Reverend Michael Bryant

**REVIEW/CORRECTION OF MEETING MINUTES:**

1. **AUGUST 4, 2014 WORK SESSION**
2. **AUGUST 7,2014 COUNCIL MEETING**
3. **AUGUST 8-9, 2014 RETREAT**

The Mayor asked if anyone had any question or concerns. Councilmember Davis stated that he showed a correction regarding the vote on the Mileage rate which was changed by City Clerk Lisa Mashburn. **Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin made a motion to approve the corrected minutes which was seconded by Councilmember Davis. Councilmember Davis, Councilmember Barfield and Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin all voted in favor of the motion.**

**FY 15 BUDGET WORKSHOP II (CITY MANAGER)**

City Manager Sumner stated that budget season starts in April every year with the proposed budget going to the department heads. After 6 weeks of thoughts and review the figures for the January to December 2015 budget are turned into the City Manager. The preliminary budget is presented to the public after the mileage rate is set. He stated the Budget workshop I was done with few questions and no sign of any changes. The budget is available at city hall and electronically. This is the time to discuss any questions or concerns. The preliminary budget is adopted before September 30, 2014, with advertisement and public input. The formal budget adoption should be before October 30, 2014 and any amendments can be done before the end of the year 2014. The Mayor asked if anyone had any questions. Councilmember Davis asked if money was allocated for updated salary study in the proposed 2015 Budget. City Manager Sumner said that no money was specifically allotted for the updated salary study in the 2015 budget but that money is allotted for consulting, this can be used for auditing or for salary study. He said we also have funds in the 2014 consulting that can be used for updated salary study.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

1. **FY 2015 BUDGET PRELIMINARY ADOPTION-CITY MANAGER**

City Manager Sumner said that we would like to solicit public comment and notify all that the Formal adoption of the budget will be at the October meeting. The Mayor asked if anyone was wishing to speak against the budget. None noted. The Mayor asked if anyone wished to speak infavor of the budget. None noted**. The Mayor asked to come out of Public Hearing and for a vote to adopt the Preliminary FY2015 budget.**

 **A motion was made by Councilmember Davis to accept the FY 2015 Preliminary adoption of the budget which was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin. Councilmember Davis, Councilmember Barfield and Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin all voted in favor of the motion.**

**CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:**

Jeanette Watson of 305 Lee Street stated that she had been a Hahira resident for the past 30 years she said and this past year she noticed that half of citizens don’t have turn signals and the other half do not use the turn signals. She said the police need to follow them and correct that.

Tim Nesmith of 7371 Union Road stated he was here regarding the golf cart registration. He said that he registered a side by side back in May. He said that he was stopped by Officer Rowe and he was told that he cannot have a side by side. He said that he would like you to reconsider using a gator or ranger. He said they are not doing anything wrong and that he is not the only one.

Jeanette Clanton of 216 E Park Street stated she is here regarding the parking behind City Hall. She said she owns property at 105 and 107 W Main Street and 100 S Church Street. She said that she rented the building to the Yarn shop and the antique shop with parking in the back of the shop for the last 40 years. She that about 4 weeks ago that they were told by Chief Davis that they could no longer park there. She said that she talked to him but did not understand why this changed. She said she also talked to the Mayor and the City Manager and that it had been resolved. The only thing that she is not sure about is the document that the tenants will be asked to sign regarding that if anything happens to their vehicles that they are held responsible for it. She said to make sure that this is applied to all businesses. She said that Hahira is a wonderful place to live with a wonderful downtown. She said that the downtown merchants have great potential so please support them, they are struggling.

Tim Coombs of 8880 Gordon Road said that he agrees with Mrs. Clanton that Hahira is a great place. He said he was here to let everyone know about the 2nd Annual VA motorcade that will be on December 5, 2014 which is the first Friday in December. He said that he has a revised gift list and thanked Dollar General and Harvey’s for their support. Also thank you to the Police department and the Fire department for all their help.

Rose Adams of 611 Hodges Street said she was going to speak on something else but decided to clarify a few things. She asked what kind of form the three businesses would have to sign and asked if the form that would hold them liable was approved by the Mayor and Council.

**REVIEW OF BILLS/BUDGET OVERAGES:**

The Mayor asked if anyone had any questions or concerns regarding the bills. None noted. **Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin made a motion to approve the bills as presented which was seconded by Councilmember Barfield. Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin, Councilmember Barfield and Councilmember Davis all voted in favor of the motion.**

**DISCUSSIONS:**

1. **PARKING BEHIND CITY HALL (CITY MANAGER)**

City Manager Sumner said that as discussed on Tuesday night he would like to know the direction regarding the parking behind City Hall. He met with the Chief Davis and Chief Bennett and they said they had no concerns with restoring the two spaces as long as they leave walking space. Councilmember Barfield said that his concern about this is that they invent a form that would not hold the City responsible if a fire. The Mayor said if the car is blocked they would not be able to hold the City liable. Councilmember Barfield said that he would like to review the form and would like to know who would be parking there. **Councilmember Barfield made a motion to mark the spaces and let them proceed to park in the spaces behind City Hall which was seconded by Councilmember Davis. Councilmember Barfield, Councilmember Davis and Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin all voted in favor of the motion.**

1. **SEWER SYSTEM PRIORITES-SPLOST VI & VII (CITY ENGINEER)**

City Manager Sumner said that per discussion on Tuesday night by Stephenson and Palmer and further discussion from retreat the short range fixe identified the I & I improvements done over 8 years ago. It was discussed that slip lines can correct the problem. We are processing storm water instead of sewerage. The system needs to be tight in several critical areas. The proposed find and fix would be around $200,000.00, and that there is just enough in SPLOST VI to do this. The Mayor asked if anyone had any questions. He then stated that this is not 100% fix, the infiltration from the older homes does not have a clean out and that we will always have some infiltration from that. Councilmember Davis verified that this is was from the priority list from engineering firm Stephenson & Palmer and that this is the only item we are considering at this time. Councilmember Barfield said when solving any problem we like to wait for the perfect time but that we know the cost of the perfect fix. He said we need to use the funds that we do have and get the ball rolling for the future. Councilmember Davis said that he agrees with Councilmember Barfield and said this has all been mentioned the last 6 months, I & I problems and infiltration problems. The issue has been the storm water running into the streets and this is designed to help fix this and necessary to get to the 100% fix in the future. This is not a band aid but will improve the I & I problem**. A motion was made by Councilmember Barfield to proceed with priority item 2 on list as recommended by the City Engineers at a cost of $200,000 which was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin. Councilmember Barfield, Councilmember Davis and Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin all voted in favor of the motion.**

1. **PROPOSED ILLICIT DISCHARGE AND ILLEGAL CONNECTION ORDINANCE-MS4 (CITY ENGINEER)**

City Manager Sumner said this item is not for consideration but more of an information item. This is mandated by government and that Public Works need to be charged under this ordinance. He said that a copy of the Albany ordinance is in the packet for a sample. He said this was in regards to examples of washing machine into a ditch, car washes go into the streams. This item is mandated and required. City Manager Sumner said that the attorney can modify the sample ordinance for the City of Hahira. **No vote on this item.**

1. **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLANNER)**

Emily Foster with the City of Valdosta Historic Preservation Planning said that she had time to research the Historic Preservation Ordinance and reviewed what the state of Georgia uses. The design guidelines from 1993 are vague but can use them, they just need to be updated. She recommended appointing member to the Historic Preservation Commission, appoint 5 citizens and two people from the Council. She said that they would have to adopt historic districts. They would be able to nominate and designate historic properties and watch over the upkeep of maintenance to prevent them from be messed with. City Manager Sumner said that staff would like direction not originated by City Staff but by historical staff. He said that he would like to know the next steps and find out more. Councilmember Barfield said that he would like to appoint a commission, it would be an advisory and the first thing they would need to do is come up with a map that this body could pass. He said when we say district we do not necessarily mean a block, just islands. He said that he would like to have the Historical Society recommend members because the historical society is doing a good job and it grows around historical support and effort. He said that we need to look into it and see how it would all work the best. Tim Coombs the Historical Society President said that we owe it to past Mayors, Councils and residents to keep our beautiful buildings. He said that we have 85 to 90 members on the Historical Society and that we all care about Hahira and stated that now that we occupy the old Smith Hospital building that the building has not had any damage. The Mayor said that he would like to see a committee from the Historical Society and from the City Council; he said that he does not want anything negative or to cause any hardship for anyone. The Mayor agreed that we appreciate the old buildings downtown but that he does not want to cause a hardship for any of the homeowners. Councilmember Barfield and Mayor Cain agreed to serve on the Commission with five members from the Historical Society. **A motion was made by Councilmember Barfield made a motion to have two members of Council and five members from the Historical Society to form the Historic Preservation Commission and work on district maps which was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin. Councilmember Barfield, Councilmember Davis and Mayor Pro Tem Barfield all voted in favor of the motion.**

1. **INVESTMENT OF RAINY DAY FUNDS (CITY MANAGER)**

City Manager Sumner said that our current CD’s pay ½ to 1% interest at this time. He said that the Georgia One Fund is a pool of money by the State of Georgia for local governments that pay a 5% return. He said this is the highest rating from any accredited agency. He said that this is an information item and that the staff is to get with the auditor and find out what is in liquid stated and can be converted. Councilmember Davis said that he is interested and said he would like to gain access from other municipalities that participate and additional information for GMA. Councilmember Barfield said that he has seen it in action that most of the investments are not risky, no high risk bonds. He said that he would really encourage this and that every penny helps. The Mayor said that he appreciates us not wanting to get into something risky. **No vote on this item.**

1. **WATER/SEWER RATES (CITY MANAGER)**

City Manager Sumner said that this a follow up from the retreat and that the Proprietary fund is an ongoing concern not sustained by water and sewer fund. He said there is not a large profit but that tap fees sustained the fund. HE stated that the tap fees have ended and the cash has drawn down with loss of $80,000 with a projected loss of $200,000 loss for 2015. He said we may have to cash in CD if the trend continues. The tap fees are not going to be there. The rates for the City have not been raised in 15 years with a $20.00 base charge for water/sewer up to 3,000 gallons and $12.75 customer base for sanitation. He said that $1.00 would add $15,000 to annual revenue and that would be $13.07 to base rates. You can raise total all at one time or phase in an increase or you can levy partial increase and subsidize from other funds. He said that he would like to hold this over for Public Hearing. Councilmember Barfield said that as discussed at the retreat that the current collections are dead last when you compare with the other City rates. He said we have held our ground but that we have to evaluate how to make changes to uphold the system. He said that we other things to be done in the long run with much steeper cost to take care of. This will not take care of the sewer system, $13.00 will help pay for system that does not work and break even. Add $13.00 to rate to make it $33.00 and this is not even in the middle of the rate scale. Councilmember Barfield said that if I am just here for 4 years, I want to at least start fixing the system. He said that we need to get our heads out of the sand, we need everyone in the system pitching in. He recommends that we seriously look at the increase to the rates and designate them for this project. Councilmember Barfield asked what the next step would be. The Mayor said that he would like to look at the figures from the retreat, where we are at and where we need to be. We need to decide about raising all at one time in one lump sum or a little at the time. Councilmember Barfield said that we need to let everyone know what we are going to do and where it will be spent from what was presented at the retreat. We need to decide the method of advertisement. Is there enough room on the water bills? Maybe put out flyers and on signs. City Manager Sumner said that he could get together a flyer and email it to everyone. **No vote on this item.**

1. **DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY/ODOM BUILDING (CITY MANAGER)**

City Manager Sumner said that this is an information item only and is a follow up to the FY 2014 retreat. The study was done on the Odom Building by Altman & Barrett and that this is a City owned building. The results of the study were that the walls are sound, the interior would need to be gutted with a cost in excess of $850,000 or more. He stated the alternative would be to sell the building but that the City of Valdosta stated we cannot occupy the building. It would take a private investor to fix up the building. Or the City to undertake it under financing structure and the DCA had a number of suggestions on a state level. You could apply for redevelopment fund for 1.5 million, apply for a quarter million from the Georgia Cities Fund or apply for Downtown Development revolving fund. He said that he does not know the appropriate next step. Councilmember Barfield says that it is a historical preservation project and we need to figure out the best way to do it. He said that there is a very negative view of the DDA. He said knowing how they work and that he ask that they come up with a method of teaching and information for the residents about what they do or don’t do. HE said that there are certain things you cannot do as a City but you can do as a DDA. The mechanism have to be put in order, redevelopment authorities can work. Councilmember Barfield said that we need to find the sharpest consultant for our public to explain things to them, maybe someone from GMA that does this all the time. City Manager Sumner asked what forum we use, should it be at work session. Councilmember Barfield said he thinks it needs to be an entity of its own and focus on it only in the right forum. We need to bring people in that have backgrounds and experience. The forum needs a monitor and Councilmember Barfield volunteered to do that.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

1. **EXISTING UV LIGHT UPGRADE-SPLOST VI (PWD WARREN)**

This is to rebuild UV system at a cost of $6666.71 to treat water at the creeks. This is an eligibleSPLOST VI expense**. Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin made a motion to rebuild the existing UV light at the expense of $666.71 which was seconded by Councilmember Davis. Councilmember Barfield, Councilmember Davis and Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin all voted in favor of the motion.**

1. **GEORGIA RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION FALL CONFERENCE (PWD WARREN)**

This is a request to attend the GRWA Conference for a 3 day class for water/sewer certification. The cost is approximately $850.00. **Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin made a motion to approve GRWA fall conference which was seconded by Councilmember Davis. Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin, Councilmember Davis and Councilmember Barfield all voted in favor of the motion**.

**REPORTS:**

Councilmember Barfield said you have all heard what was spoke about tonight, when you hear something take a few days to mull it over. The City needs to take a turn, it may hurt us all but it has to be done. Thank you all for being here tonight, take the information and get the message out. This is affecting everyone. He is proud that we have been able to keep cost down but you will have to do the opposite. He asked the City Manager if we got the flags. We need to replace the Georgia Flag, get a new one and keep the flags up to date.

Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve District I. He thanked everyone for attending the retreat and thanked staff for opening our eyes and looking at things that we have needed to deal with for a long time, we are making progress but have a long way to go. He stated that we have had the same water rates for the last 20 years. He said that the I & I problem needs to be addressed and that we need money to fix the system. He then said what has stayed at the same rate for the last 20 years. He said that the departments went without to stretch the money but that everyone expected the fire, police and public works to always be there to maintain the level of service and a lot of the time it takes a lot of effort and time. Thank you to the Mayor and Council for the hard work and for having the knowledge to see what needs to be done for the City. He stated that we tried to correct this in the past and that the need has come to a head and we need to take appropriate actions. HE said that we have a great City and employees and the budget reflect that, his hat goes off to each department, they are the backbone of the City.

Councilmember Kenneth Davis said that he is the newest City Councilmember, 10 months and very proud to be part of this group and community. He said the Mayor and Council has done refinance to the GEFA loan of over half a million, we have provided funding to help the fire department to make improvements. He said the Police Department does a bang up job on the highway and in town and the Public Works department keeps things going and does a great job. He is glad to be a part of this, we have to make hard decision, have added discussion and come up with a way to communicate a tough decision that no one will like. HE said when you talk about this and put information out there that he cautions you to ask if you hear something that does not sound right to please ask about it. Thank you and have a great night.

City Manager Sumner thanked the Mayor and Council for the opportunity to serve. He said that he loves this City and felt joy to serve this city for the last 8 years. Come by and see me if you have any questions.

Mayor Bruce Cain said that he really enjoyed seeing the crowds. He thanked the department heads. He said we do not know what is going on while we are sleeping and that many things take the employee’s time away from their families. He said the police department is dedicated and they all got certified to use the Tasers and that they had to be shot for certification. HE thanked the Council, City Manager for their hard worked and said that they had all earned their money. He thanked the Councilmember for a great retreat, there is a lot to be done. Thank you for a great job.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin to discuss property which was seconded by Councilmember Davis. Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin, Councilmember Davis, Councilmember Barfield all voted in favor of the motion.**

**A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin to come out of Executive Session which was seconded by Councilmember Barfield. Councilmember Barfield, Councilmember Davis and Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin all voted in favor of the motion.**

The Mayor asked for a motion to adjourn.

**Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Councilmember Barfield. Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin, Councilmember Barfield and Councilmember Davis all voted in favor of the motion.**

**ADJOURN.**

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**Mayor Bruce Cain**

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**City Clerk Lisa Mashburn**