

HAHIRA CITY COUNCIL  
COUNCIL MEETING  
MAY 4, 2006

Mayor and City Council met for a regular Council Meeting on Thursday, May 4, 2006, at 7:30 P.M. at the courthouse with Mayor Stalvey presiding.

PRESENT: Mayor Johnny Stalvey; Councils Rose Adams, Terry Benjamin, Wayne Bullard and Temple Ogundu; City Manager, Tom Weldon; PWD, Donnie Warren; Police Chief, Terry Davis; City Attorney, Rob Plumb; Recorder, Marilyn Brady.

ABSENT: Fire Chief, Dwight Bennett

Mayor Stalvey called the meeting to order. A quorum was established.

Mayor Stalvey called on Council Ogundu to lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance, followed with the invocation given by Council Bullard.

Mayor Stalvey welcomed everyone to the meeting.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Mayor Stalvey asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. **Council Adams made a motion to adopt the agenda, seconded by Council Ogundu. Vote was unanimous.**

REVIEW, CORRECTION AND ACCEPTANCE OF COUNCIL MINUTES

A. April 3<sup>rd</sup> Work Session and April 6<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting

Mayor Stalvey asked Council if there were any additions, deletions or corrections to the minutes? Council Adams stated that she had a correction on the Council Meeting minutes, under #5 – New Business, need to add the code on the internet for the first year per contract is \$250.00, the year after \$350.00. This included the four updates. The code will be on line. City Manager, Tom Weldon, stated that he had printed copies of the code at City Hall, and as soon the city adopts an ordinance, then it will be put on line. Mr. Weldon has a copy of the ordinance which Council can approve in June if they desire.

Council Adams also had a correction to #7 – Update Corporate Authorization Resolution. It was discussed and voted on for the City Manager, Tom Weldon, to be added to the resolution.

City Manager, Tom Weldon, stated that he had one change, the third of the Citizens to be Heard, 2<sup>nd</sup> page of minutes, when Mr. Freeman Rivers was addressing the Council, the reference to Bethel AME Church should read Folsom Chapel. Mr. Freeman Rivers added: Folsom Chapel CME. City Manager, Tom

Weldon, stated that it was not Bethel AME Church that he was asking to waiver sanitation charges.

Mayor Stalvey asked for a motion to accept the changes. **Council Benjamin made a motion to accept the changes, seconded by Council Ogundu. Vote was unanimous.**

## REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF BILLS

Mayor Stalvey called for a motion to pay the bills. **Council Adams made a motion to pay the bills, seconded by Council Ogundu. Vote was unanimous.**

## CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Mr. Freeman Rivers, 204 S. Hall St., stated that last month when he came to the Council Meeting, the three items that he mentioned, he wanted to let everyone know that the City Manager is well on the job, especially the one that he asked to do in memory of Otis McCann. He commended the City Manager and said to keep up the good work.

Mr. Richard Lee, County Commissioner, stated that he came up to meet the new City Manager and welcome him to Lowndes County, on behalf of Chairman Rod Casey, G. Robert Carter and Edgar Roberts. He stated that they looked forward to working with Mr. Weldon.

Mr. Lee gave an update on the skate park. He stated that many citizens were using the park, some from other counties. He would like to work with the city in the upcoming Honey Bee Festival to integrate this into the Honey Bee Festival. There is a practice ball field, a lighted ball field and the skate park, in which they could do a night's activity or another day's activity. They would welcome anyone participating in this.

Mr. Lee said that the Lowndes County Jail was rapidly coming to a conclusion to that 1<sup>st</sup> Phase. This is a 6 million dollar project that is paid by SPLOST money. It is housing, medical, booking, visitation and food service being replaced by state of the art, up to date facilities for about 1,000 person capacity. Phase 2 will be in SPLOST 6, which will be an addition of some pods, renovations of the newer parts of the jail, and the demolition of the old stockade and some of the older parts of the jail. The state of the art facility will have a lot better service.

Mr. Lee said that roads are being worked on. Woodrow Lane is well underway. Thompson Road Subdivision, east, where the Barber Subdivision is located. Part of Thompson Road will be worked on and they will do the second part later on. Reed River Road is under contract and under construction, off of Cat Creek.

The County Commissioners will be adopting a Unified Land Development Code, which is a work in progress for the last 15 to 18 months, to streamline and bring together the development process in unincorporated parts of Lowndes County. This should go forward on Tuesday night.

Mr. Lee stated that in 1992 he came to the Hahira Council and was asked about Staten Road bridge, which had been burned down a year or two before. The DOT had their final plan and review on this on the 25<sup>th</sup> and there is no reason for that project to be held up anymore. The money is in place with DOT. They have gotten a firm commitment from Mr. Harold Linencald from DOT. It should be bid sometime this summer, maybe the fall. The bridge will be a major artery way to get back into Valdosta, other than Val Del Road or Bemiss Road. The County will pave the road up to it and north of it to connect to McMillan Road.

Mr. Lee reported on the widening of Hwy 41. He said that it was his understanding that the DOT would be holding public concept meetings this summer or next fall to get feedback from interested parties, as to four lanes, four lanes raised medium, two pairs or what. The plan is from Hwy 41 north all the way to Hahira.

Mayor Stalvey thanked Mr. Lee for his report.

#### CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Agree to hold Public Hearing during June Council Meeting to discuss closure of Lawson Street between Church & Webb Streets to accommodate Sunday church services at First Baptist Church
- B. Accept Georgia Rural Water Association offer to conduct free Water & Sewage Rate Study
- C. Approve Nutrition Program Contract for fiscal year 2007
- D. Appoint Diane Bellflower, City Utility Clerk, as Pension Committee Secretary
- E. Approve and Appoint Downtown Development Committee
- F. Approve Contract for Services between City of Hahira and Helen Pettijean to Serve as Market Days Coordinator
- G. Approve pursuit of legal remedies against absentee owners of lots identified by HPD, Chief Davis
- H. Approve City advertisements in upcoming Valdosta Daily Times publications
- I. Approve HPD, Chief Davis' July 23-26 training
- J. Approve City of Ethics Emblem design proposed by HPD, Chief Davis
- K. Agree and Approve purchase of bench for Hahira Elementary School under CPIE program
- L. Approve Professional Services Contract with Stevenson & Palmer Engineering, Inc. for Land Application System Improvements
- M. Approve development of Memorandum of Understanding with South Georgia Medical Center regarding their use of the old fire station for EMS basing in Hahira

Mayor Stalvey asked Council if they accepted the Consent Agenda. City Manager, Tom Weldon, stated that on Item L, approve Professional Services Contract with Stevenson & Palmer Engineering, Inc. for Land Application System Improvements, the City Attorney had changed one page and he asked that if they approve it, that it be with the change proposed by the City Attorney.

Council Adams asked for the City Manager to read the items in the Consent Agenda. Council Ogundu also requested that the names of the Downtown Development Committee in Item E on the agenda be read.

City Manager, Tom Weldon, read the list of items on the Consent Agenda and as requested by Council Ogundu gave the names of the Downtown Development Committee, which was:

Myrna Ballard, President of Val-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce  
Vickie Lindsey, Branch Manager of Hahira Citizens Community Bank  
Nancy Parr, owner of Frames on Main  
Scott Purvis, employed by Dept. of Community Affairs  
Sharon Respass, associated with Sew Blessed  
Marshall Ingram, non-businessman  
Temple Ogundu, Councilman

Mayor Stalvey called for a motion to accept. **Council Ogundu made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda as read by the City Manager, seconded by Council Adams. Discussion followed. Vote was unanimous.**

## OLD BUSINESS

### A. Resume efforts to refinish/replace Courthouse floor and door

Mayor Stalvey stated that bids were received in 2005 on this. City Manager, Tom Weldon, stated that the bid submitted by Mr. William Bullard was still operative. He stated that he would contact the second bidder if Council wanted him to. Council Adams asked if this included widening the door. Police Chief, Terry Davis, stated yes.

Mayor Stalvey recommended postponing this until both parties have been contacted. City Manager, Tom Weldon, stated that he wanted to know if this is something that Council wanted to do and to let him go ahead.

**Council Ogundu made a motion to table Item 7 and to let the City Manager contact the interested parties, seconded by Council Benjamin. Councils Ogundu, Benjamin and Adams voted yes. Council Bullard abstained. Motion passed.**

## NEW BUSINESS

### A. Request for additional sewer taps

Mayor Stalvey stated that he wanted to be sure that the city doesn't wind up with any unsanitary sewer system. He did not want to see any hazardous health problems in the City of Hahira because of the sewer system. He was in sympathy for the developers in town and anyone wanting to apply for a sewer tap. He said that at the Work Session on Monday, City Engineer, Ronnie Dudley, reported that the EPD rejected the recommendations on the Huff report. He asked City Manager, Tom Weldon, to comment on this. Mr. Weldon stated that the City Engineers position was predicated on the report that the Huff Engineering Co. made. After Huff had studied the Land Application System, they concluded that there was more capacity than EPD was allowing the city. The recommendation from Stevenson & Palmer Engineering was that the EPD should relax the limits imposed in the Consent Order on the basis of the Huff study. The EPD called last Monday and advised that they were not willing to relax those restrictions. As a result of that notification, Ronnie Dudley, City Engineer, invited Glen Beherns from EPD to come down and inspect the Land Application System. He is scheduled to be here on Tuesday next week, to meet with representatives from Public Works and hopefully, Ronnie Dudley will be able to convince EPD that there is, in fact, more capacity than the current Consent Order restricts. He stated that it was not an unreasonable position to wait until the visit and see if there is some positive outcome from the visit before any decision is made in regard to additional sewer taps.

Mayor Stalvey stated that in March the city issued 56 sewer taps, 13 to each developer and somehow the city got committed by someone else. He said that he wanted to be careful when sewer permits are issued.

Council Benjamin stated that he preferred to wait until the meeting with Ronnie Dudley and EPD takes place, and contingent upon that meeting, Council could come back and decide what they want to do.

Mayor Stalvey said that would be a wise decision, because of where the city is at today because someone acted too fast, prior to this Administration. It has gotten the city in a bad position and they are going to have to work it out.

City Manager, Tom Weldon, stated that of the 56 permits issued, only 30 have been paid for.

Mayor Stalvey recommended postponing any decision on issuing any further sewer taps at this meeting.

City Attorney, Rob Plumb, stated that he could only relay conversations that he had with Ronnie Dudley, who will be meeting with David Huff and the EPD Engineer. Mr. Dudley believed that it was kind of a balancing situation. Approval of additional taps would provide a source of revenue for some of the improvements that need to be made at this time. He thought that approval of additional taps would be alright.

Council Adams stated that she would like to wait until after the meeting to hear what they have to say.

Mayor Stalvey stated that he thought that issuing more taps would not be the right thing to do. He recommended postponing any decision at tonight's meeting depending on further hearing on discussions and findings of EPD and Mr. Glen Beherns on Tuesday. He called for a motion. **Council Benjamin made a motion to postpone any sewer taps until the meeting with Ronnie Dudley, Mr. Glen Beherns and Mr. Huff on Tuesday, seconded by Council Ogundu. Discussion followed. Councils Ogundu, Benjamin and Adams voted yes. Council Bullard voted no. Motion passed.**

Mr. Roy Copeland stated to Mayor Stalvey that he had a question. At some point, if they have a definitive point in time, this issue will be brought before Council, contingent on what is decided by the meeting between the engineers and the city on Tuesday? Mayor Stalvey stated that it would probably be on Tuesday. City Attorney, Rob Plumb, asked Mr. Copeland if his question was "when will the next meeting be"? Mayor Stalvey said that it would probably be in June.

- B. Request by Habitat for Humanity for waiver of licenses and permit fees for construction project at 311 Wright Street

Mayor Stalvey stated that waiving license and permit fees covered lots of territory. City Manager, Tom Weldon, reported that the First Baptist Church made a similar request and it was denied. Mayor Stalvey did not recommend for the Council that they offer any kind of waiver of license or permit fees for construction project at 311 Wright Street. He did not like to set precedence. Mayor Stalvey called for a motion. **Council Adams made a motion to reject the request to waive the license and permit fees for construction project at 311 Wright Street. Discussion followed. No second on motion. Motion died for lack of a second.**

**Council Benjamin made a motion to let them pay the tap fees but waive the permit fees. There was no second. Motion died for lack of a second.**

**Council Bullard made a motion to waive the license and permit fees at 311 Wright Street, seconded by Council Benjamin. Councils Benjamin and Bullard voted yes. Councils Ogundu and Adams voted no. Mayor**

**Stalvey broke the tie, voting no. Motion denied.**

C. Discuss & decide on financial management strategy for City of Hahira

Mayor Stalvey stated that this was a very important decision for himself, the Council and citizens of Hahira. He stated that more time was needed to decide on this issue. Mayor Stalvey recommended postponing this decision until the June meeting.

Council Ogundu stated that there were two issues. One is to outsource the financial management and the other is to do the financial management in-house. He said that last year the city spent over \$56,000.00 to buy a system called Encode and he believed that the city could not abandon that system. He believed that they should make a decision in order to have the function outsourced or what type of function should the city outsource and what shall the city keep in-house. It is his opinion that financial management should be done in-house and the city should get someone qualified part-time. He recommended that they do this in-house and give the City Manager authority to do what he needs to do to get it started.

Mayor Stalvey stated that he would like to keep it in-house. He questioned how it worked last year.

Council Ogundu stated that the city needed to hire a qualified person. One who knows debit and credit.

Mayor Stalvey asked what this would cost? Council Ogundu said that he had no idea. The City Manager should do is to compare costs of keeping it in-house or outsource it.

Mayor Stalvey said that he just wanted to know that one month from now, three months from now, next January 1<sup>st</sup>, these books are 100% up. That is a very important priority.

Council Benjamin recommended giving the City Manager authority to look at it and if he needs to hire someone to go ahead, bring Incode if they need them.

City Manager, Tom Weldon, stated that the decision on what is to be outsourced and what is to be retained in-house rests with the Council. When Council informs him as to what the functions are, he would be glad to seek the quotes they need.

Council Adams stated that there was a time frame involved. She stated that she would like to use the software that the city now has and hire Incode to come in and train a financial officer and a minimum of three people.

Mayor Stalvey stated that he agreed and as he stated at the Work Session to get the Incode people here as quick as possible.

City Manager, Tom Weldon, stated that the third person hired should be on board before Incode people come.

Council Adams stated that advertising for the position of Financial Manager needed to be done.

City Manager, Tom Weldon, stated that he talked with Tommy Griffin and was told that the city could hire a Financial Manager at a starting pay of \$10.82.

**Council Bullard made a motion for City Manager to find someone or cheaper to go in-house, check with the CPA firm and farm part of it out. City Manager asked did the motion include permission for him to advertise for a Finance Officer to work 3 days a week at \$10.82 per hour. Council Adams made a motion to use the software that the city has, to hire Incode for training to come here for the amount of money that the city has and hire, before the training, a Financial Officer, seconded by Council Ogundu. Vote was unanimous.**

D. Revision of City Travel Policy

Mayor Stalvey stated that Council had copies of this for review. City Manager, Tom Weldon, stated that this was a policy that had a revision in January, 2001, but he could not determine if it had been approved and included in the code. He said that it would satisfy the current requirements for a travel policy for the City of Hahira. The travel reimbursable rate would adjust as the IRS allows. Currently the rate is .44 ½ cents per mile.

**Council Bullard made a motion to accept the revised edition of the City Travel Policy, seconded by Council Benjamin. Discussion followed. Vote was unanimous.**

E. Discuss and decide on disposition of stage now located behind caboose

Mayor Stalvey asked who the stage belonged to? City Manager, Tom Weldon, stated that it belonged to the city. He also asked who owned the trailer? City Manager, Tom Weldon, stated that it was the city's. PWD, Donnie Warren said that he thought it belonged to John Thursby. City Manager, Tom Weldon, said that he had spoken to Carol Jacobs of the Honey Bee Committee and informed her that the city did not feel that they could store the stage any longer given where it was stored on railroad property and it is in a state of disrepair and poses a hazard to children who might want to play on it. The city would move it wherever they choose to put it if they could put



it in a place where it would not be a hazard. Ms. Jacobs stated that she would have to bring it up to the committee. City Manager, Tom Weldon, stated that he has a letter prepared for his signature going to the Honey Bee Committee saying that if they want it, the city will move it, as long as it is in the city on private property. If they do not want it, the city can decide on what to do with it, burn it or dismantle it.

F. Mulberry Subdivision retention ponds

Mayor Stalvey asked if the city had gotten any information on this yet. He said that this may take a little more time. City Manager, Tom Weldon, stated that there were two issues, one is engineering and the other is who puts the fence around it? If the City Attorney can get the information from the plat then the city can get some remedy on both of the issues from the responsible people.

G. Discuss and decide on yard trash pick-up and disposal by Public Works Department

Mayor Stalvey stated that Council had a copy of this in their folder. He asked City Manager, Tom Weldon, to give a report on this. Mr. Weldon stated that there is a policy in effect that allows people with yard trash to call Public Works and schedule a pick-up. Cost would be \$25.00 per pick-up. The trash is hauled to the County landfill to be disposed. He read a letter from Public Works stating what to do with the yard trash, burn it or take it to the landfill. The cost to dump at the landfill is more than what the city charges for the pick-up. The city would also need to add more employees to be able to handle the workload. The city would need to establish guidelines as to what is acceptable yardtrash. Mr. Weldon said that it is costing the city.

Council Ogundu stated that since this is a special service and currently we are charging \$25.00, he would like to see what it is costing the city currently and how much the city can charge. He wanted the City Manager to prepare a guideline as to how the city is going to do this. He stated they needed to table this pending the receipt of the City Manager's guideline. City Manager, Tom Weldon, stated that he would have a recommendation ready for the June Council Meeting.

Council Adams asked why the trash could not be burned at the City Barn? Chris Stevens of Public Works stated that they had received many complaints from citizens in the past when trash was burned.

H. Automatic water meter reading in city

Mayor Stalvey called on City Manager, Tom Weldon, to give a report on this. Mr. Weldon stated that he had done cost analysis on this. It would cost from

\$131,000.00 to \$140,000.00 to automate the system completely. It would take the city 31 years to recoup the cost of \$131,000.00. This is not the right time to consider this.

**Council Bullard made a motion to hold up on this, seconded by Council Benjamin. Vote was unanimous.**

## REPORTS

### (A) Council

Mayor Stalvey asked if Council had any reports? Council Ogundu stated that he had spoken to the City Manager about the American flag being too small. City Manager, Tom Weldon, stated that the city bought new flags according to the height of the pole and the recommended flag size for the height of the pole.

### (B) City Manager

Mayor Stalvey asked the City Manager if he had a report? Mr. Weldon thanked the citizens for their cooperation during the smoke test of the sewer system. He also thanked the ladies of Shiloh Florist for the yellow ribbons tied up in welcoming the 48<sup>th</sup> home.

### (C) Mayor

Mayor Stalvey said that he had no report.

**Council Benjamin made a motion to go out of regular session and enter into an executive session to discuss legal matters, seconded by Council Ogundu. Vote was unanimous.**

At this time citizens returned to meeting.

Mayor Stalvey asked for a motion to authorize him to sign the papers concerning the executive session.

**Council Adams made a motion authorizing Mayor Stalvey to sign the papers concerning the executive session, seconded by Council Benjamin. Vote was unanimous.**

**Council Benjamin made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Council Ogundu. Vote was unanimous.**

There being no further business to discuss, meeting adjourned at 9:15 P.M.

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Johnny Stalvey  
Mayor

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Marilyn Brady  
Recorder