

HAHIRA CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

DECEMBER 4, 2014

7:30 P.M.

COURTHOUSE

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

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

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Bruce Cain

ESTABLISH QUORUM: Mayor Bruce Cain

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Bruce Cain

INVOCATION: Pastor Mike Wells

PROCLAMATION: Postpone to later date, Hahira Middle School could not attend tonight.

REVIEW/CORRECTION OF MEETING MINUTES:

- A. NOVEMBER 3, 2014 WORK SESSION**
- B. NOVEMBER 6, 2014 COUNCIL MEETING**

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

PUBLIC HEARING:

A. FY 14 BUDGET AMENDMENTS(CITY MANAGER)

City Manager Sumner said that as discussed on Monday night this is done each year to amend the budget. He stated that we had one amendment in the water/sewer fund and 9 in the general fund. These are done by the department level not by the line item. This also includes the accounting of the expenditures for the SPLOST funds. These have all been advertised and are available at City Hall for inspection. He then asked if anyone had any questions. None noted. The Mayor asked if anyone would like to speak against the FY 14 Budget Amendments. None noted. The Mayor asked if anyone would like to speak in favor of the FY14 Budget Amendments. None noted. **Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin made a motion to accept the FY Budget Amendments as presented which was seconded by Councilmember Barfield. Mayor Pro Tem**

Benjamin, Councilmember Barfield, Councilmember Clendenin and Councilmember Davis all voted in favor of the motion.

B. APPLICATION FOR BANSASI PATEL, BIG FOOT TRAVEL CENTER-1311 GEORIGIA HIGHWAY 122 WEST FOR PACKAGE SALE OF BEER AND WINE (CHIEF DAVIS)

Chief Davis stated that he found no reason to deny the application for name change for Big Foot Travel Center, we have made the required advertisement and all is in order. The Mayor asked if anyone wished to speak against the name change for Big Foot Travel Center. None noted. The Mayor asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of the name change for Big Foot Travel Center. None noted. **Councilmember Clendenin made a motion to approve the application for Bansasi Patel of Big Foot Travel Center which was seconded by Councilmember Davis. Councilmember Clendenin, Councilmember Davis, Councilmember Barfield and Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin all voted in favor of the motion.**

C. WATER-SEWER RATE ORDINANCE (FIRST READING-CITY MANAGER)

City Manager Sumner said that the proprietary fund and the water/sewer rates have been discussed by Mayor and Council over the last few years. The financial health over the proprietary funds and capital improvements have been a concern. He stated that the tap fees fulfilled the deficit in the past but the water/sewer rates have not increased since 1991. The cost is up which created a situation to rely on tap fees and with the slow- down of construction or complexes we have a reduction in revenue. Flyers have been sent out to each resident and we had Public Hearings to inform the residents. In October we had input from the citizens regarding the water/sewer increase and how to increase. In November we drafted an ordinance and the document is here tonight for the first reading. Amendment A is the fee schedule, Amendment B is the low income Senior citizens discount, Amendment C is the policy for perpetual increases starting in January 2016 and every year thereafter a 3% increase. Amendment D is the application for Senior citizens discount. The increase will be phased in quarterly for residential and commercial customers. City Manager Sumner said this is the first reading. The Mayor asked if anyone wished to speak against the water rate ordinance. None noted. The Mayor asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of the water rate ordinance. None noted. The Mayor asked if anyone had any questions. Councilmember Clendenin said that he thought we discussed \$7.00 on Monday night and that would bring the proprietary fund in the black for 2015. Why put money in the bank for later. He said that he hears our sewer system is great, which it is; it is whichever way the wind blows. He said that he thought we need to do a study. He said that he cannot go to his neighbors and say raise more than \$7.00 just to add a pipe. Councilmember Davis said that numbers have been thrown around at the presentation given by the City Manager and then we had the property sale and tap fees for commercial accounts that were unexpected and \$7.00 would be enough for this year. But what about 2015 and he said that he did not hear anyone say we would put in a pipe, that is not true, there was no action taken. He said that presentation was for information and if it was presented any other way it is not true. Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin said that several solutions were discussed but one was not decided on. He said we have had I & I problem for years, we have studies and that it is the issue at hand to maintain what we have. City Manager Sumner said that the present auditors have stated that we do not need to fund this with tap fees or property sales like we are doing, this cannot and should not sustain the fund. It should be funded by fees that we charge,

the \$7.00 increase would need tap fees and property sales to sustain. The Mayor clarified the previous discussion to get things on track and said that we need to go ahead and do an increase in the water rates. Councilmember Barfield said that a lot of people have approached him and stated the various things that are wrong, we have the studies and the research that we need. This increase is what needs to be done. We have to take real action, we are that point, not wait until it get to late to fix the problems, go ahead and create resources and fix it right. Councilmember Barfield said that it was all explained at the retreat. There is a reason that we are behind the other cities, the cost of pipe and fitting, we need to be reactive across the board. Councilmember Davis stated that we are not increasing the water rates to bank money. Our anticipated debt was reduced because of the extra money from property sales and tap fees. He said can we get by with just \$10.00, we don't want to just get by, this is a sliding scale and we are trying to change the problem that has existed for the last 23 years. Mayor Pro Tem said that was for one year that is not perpetual. Councilmember Davis said that he thought to back off now would be irresponsible. Councilmember Barfield said we did back off from the original amount of \$20.00 by \$7.00 and this would take care of a deteriorating water system. The Mayor asked if anyone wished to speak against the water rate increase. None noted. The Mayor asked if anyone withed to speak in favor of the water rate increase. Wilmon Stanley of 308 S Washington Street said that he had attended workshops and meetings and said that many numbers have been tossed around. He said as a homeowner he has to be prepared for breakdowns and leaks, he has to set aside money for an emergency. And he feels that the City should do the same thing so that the City can continue to operate. He said that he does not know why someone would put out to the public that the Council is trying to rob citizens. He said that he did not understand that if you knew there was a problem over the last 23 years why something was not done about it and that this is the first time he has ever heard anything about a rate increase. Everything goes up and he would like to go to bed at night and not worry about it. He said that he knows a lot about accounting we talk about a lump sum of money but it is projected to come in over a 6 year period. He said to look at what is true, we have an old water system with 30% need repair what if the other 70% goes down at some time, little by little it will all wear out and then what will we do. Mike Wells of 111 S. Church Street said that he would like to thank you for working so hard, in 2010 Hahira had the highest percent of growth. Our City will not be able to handle things with the current system. He said that he appreciated the senior citizen discount and that he thinks it is wonderful, but that he believes we need to build up a nest egg, if we are far enough ahead after some time then stop the 3% increases each year. Councilmember Barfield said that one Council cannot tie the hands of any future Council, there is nothing that another Council cannot change. **A motion was made by Councilmember Davis to accept the ordinance as presented for water/sewer which was seconded by Councilmember Barfield. Councilmember Davis, Councilmember Barfield and Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin all voted in favor of the motion. Councilmember Clendenin voted against the motion. The vote was 3-1.**

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

None.

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 pay the bills as presented which was seconded by Councilmember Clendenin. Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin, Councilmember Barfield, Councilmember Davis and Councilmember Clendenin all voted in favor of the motion.**

DISCUSSIONS:

A. DOWNTOWN VEGETATION (CITY MANAGER)

As discussed on Monday night the arborist recommended the crepe myrtles and Councilmember Clendenin suggested the cypress pencil bushes. The price for the cypress pencil is \$58.00 per bush and the crepe myrtles are \$85.00 per tree. A motion was made by **Councilmember Clendenin to post pone to later date. No second on the motion. Councilmember Barfield made a motion to proceed with the arborist suggested single stalk crepe myrtle at \$85.00 per tree which was seconded by Councilmember Davis. Councilmember Barfield, Councilmember Davis and Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin all voted in favor of the motion. Councilmember Clendenin voted against the motion. The vote was 3-1.**

CONSENT AGENDA:

A. MOODY SUPPORT COMMITTEE CONTRIBUTION

B. WINTER CONFERENCE-CITY & FINANCE CLERKS

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

REPORTS:

Councilmember Barfield wished everyone a Merry Christmas and said that he loves this time of year.

Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin thanks the citizens in District I for the opportunity to serve and thanked them all for coming out tonight. He thanked all the departments for the level of service that we depend on and said job well done. He said that the Mayor and Council has stewed over the water and sewer in every consideration. He said that they tried to make it as painless as possible but with the given task they are trying to safeguard the citizens to provide water/sewer and thanked the Mayor and Council for their input.

Councilmember Davis thanked everyone for coming out and said that he enjoyed his first year of service. Merry Christmas to everyone and said that he invites you to get information that we have, get the actual information. He said that it is available in the presentation. Thank you to all.

Councilmember Clendenin said that he attended the seminar given by the Valdosta Daily Times and it was very enlightening. He said that we have big issues with Executive Session; he said that if council feels something in Executive session affects the citizens then he should discuss it. HE said that in the last executive session that Council agreed to offer a sum of money for railroad property and the railroad agreed to the price. He said that they agreed on a City Park and City hall on the property.

City Manager Sumner thanked everyone for coming out and the opportunity to serve. A special thanks to our Boy Scout who is in the audience. Thank you to all the department heads, thank you to public works for coming out on Sunday and working on the busted water main, they worked hard. Congrats to Chief Davis on his patriotic award.

Mayor Bruce Cain said that he had enjoyed this year, a lot was accomplished. Thank you to the City Manager, City Clerk and Finance Clerk. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin to go into Executive Session to discuss property and seconded by Councilmember Barfield. Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin, Councilmember Davis, Councilmember Barfield and Councilmember Clendenin all voted in favor of the motion.

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

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

ADJOURN.

Mayor Bruce Cain

City Clerk Lisa Mashburn