

Minutes of Hahira Council Meetings for the month of August, 2008

HAHIRA CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION AUGUST 4, 2008 6:30 P.M. COURTHOUSE

Mayor and City Council met for a Work Session August 4, 2008 at the Courthouse with Mayor Wayne Bullard presiding.

PRESENT:

Mayor Wayne Bullard, Councils, Mayor Pro Tem Rose Adams, Terry Benjamin, Ralph Clendenin, Bruce Cain, City Manager Jonathan Sumner, Police Chief Terry Davis, Director Donnie Warren, Interim City Clerk Belinda Chappell, Downtown Development Coordinator Emily Grace Newkirk.

REVIEW / CORRECTION OF MINUTES:

June 3, 2008 Work Session

July 3, 2008 Council Meeting

July 31, 2008 First Millage Rate Public Hearing

July 31, 2008 Second Millage Rate Public Hearing

There were no comments concerning the minutes.

REVIEW OF BILLS / BUDGET OVERAGES:

There were no questions concerning the bills.

Public Hearing

Third Public Hearing to Set Millage Rate (City Manager)

City Manager Jonathan Sumner stated that a third Public Hearing was scheduled for August 7, 2008 at the Courthouse. Sumner stated that at that time Mayor and Council would hear any remaining input from citizens about the proposed millage

rate increase and have the opportunity to leave the millage rate at its current rate of 0.00538 or increase the millage rate to the proposed amount of 0.00588.

DISCUSSIONS:

LARP 2009 Priority List (City Manager)

City Manager Jonathan Sumner stated that DOT asked the City to present a priority list of streets that needed to be paved with the assistance of the (LARP) Local Assistance Road Program. Sumner stated that this year LARP was planning to pave Owen Street from East Stanfill to East Main and also B.J. Miley Street from Marshall Street to Railroad Street. Mayor Pro Tem Adams was concerned with when these streets were to be paved. Councilman Cain stated that Reames and Sons Construction Company was in the process of getting ready to start the paving of the streets. Mayor Pro Tem Adams stated that she would like to add Stanfill Street from Hagan Bridge to Highway 122 to be on the priority list for DOT. City Manager stated that these streets would be put on the priority list to submit to DOT by August 29th 2008.

Update on Water Meter Replacement Project (City Manager)

City Manager Jonathan Sumner stated to Mayor and Council that Public Works Director Donnie Warren was in the process of getting several bids on the different types of water meters to replace the old meters that the City is currently using. Director Warren suggested that the City should purchase the manual meters, verses the wand read meters. Warren stated that the manual read meters are the least expensive compared to the wand read meters.

City Pins (Mayor Pro Tem Adams)

Mayor Pro Tem Adams stated that the City is getting ready to order City lapel pins and business name tags. Adams stated there are several different designs that the Mayor and Council could choose from. Adams stated that Downtown Development Coordinator Emily Grace Newkirk helped with getting the different designs and compared the pricing and quality of the pins. Mrs. Newkirk presented to Mayor and Council a price sheet from two different manufacturers of the pins, JL Concepts and Keys To The City. Councilman Clendenin stated that he was concerned with whether the City could receive a sample from each manufacturer of the pins. Mrs. Newkirk stated that the City could not receive a sample with the reason being the manufacturer would have to cast a dye to make the pin for the City, which in return would expect the City to purchase the pin from that manufacturer. Mayor and Council reviewed the price sheet and the quality of the pins from each manufacturer. Mrs. Newkirk also presented to Mayor and Council

examples of name tags for the Administrative personnel. She stated that she had received examples and comparison pricing from Action Printing and Harmon's Awards. Mrs. Newkirk presented these to Mayor and Council for review. Council expressed approval of the pin from Keys to the City , and tag design from Harmon's Awards.

D.) City Hall Sign (Mayor Pro Tem Adams)

Mayor Pro Tem Adams stated that the marquee sign was not large enough to display the information that needed to be posted on the sign. City Manager Sumner stated that he had two quotes from Day Signs for the repairing of the sign. Sumner stated that the first quote is for making a completely new sign which would cost \$1,620 dollars and the second quote is for repairing the existing sign by adding a new track to hold six inch lettering instead of the nine inch letters that the City is currently using, the cost of repairing the sign is \$425 dollars. Council expressed approval of the lesser option.

E.) Exit 29 Clean Up (Mayor Pro Tem Adams)

Mayor Pro Tem Adams stated that the area around exit 29 needed to be mowed and cleaned up. City Manager Sumner stated that he would speak with Director Donnie Warren and have the exit 29 area mowed within a couple of days.

F.) Water Wagon (Mayor Pro Tem Adams)

Mayor Pro Tem Adams stated that she would like the City to have a water wagon to water all the flowers and shrubs that have been planted in front of the Main Street businesses. Adams stated that several business owners have purchased the flowers and without water, the flowers and shrubs are dying. Director Warren stated that he would get a quote for the City to review.

G.) Urns for City Streets (Mayor Pro Tem Adams)

Mayor Pro Tem Adams stated that she would like to get quotes on purchasing flower urns for the City. Director Warren stated that he would find out where the urns that the City currently has was purchased and get a quote on them for the Mayor and Council to review.

H.) Knock-Out Roses Planted at the Caboose (Mayor Pro Tem Adams)

Mayor Pro Tem Adams stated that she would like the City to plant more knock out roses around the caboose area. Adams stated that these flowers would help to beautify the City of Hahira. Director Warren stated that he would look into this.

**Update on Manhole Rehab and Barfield Home Water
Condition (Mayor Pro Tem Adams)**

Mayor Pro Tem Adams stated that she was concerned on the issue with the Barfield Home water condition. Director Warren stated that he had flushed the lines, that the water was running like it should be but the lines need to be flushed on a monthly basis to keep from settling. City Manager Sumner stated the City Engineer would have contract documents and bid advertisements ready very shortly for the manhole rehab project.

J.) Map of U.S. 41 Widening (Mayor Pro Tem Adams)

Mayor Pro Tem Adams stated that she would like to have copies of the map of the widening of Highway 41 North to give to concerned citizens. City Manager Sumner stated that a map has been requested from DOT and he would contact DOT to get an update on the map status.

K.) Appointment of Members to Beautification Committee (Mayor Pro Tem Adams)

Mayor Pro Tem Adams stated that she would like Mayor and Council to review the submitted names for the Newly Reconstituted Beautification Committee. Adams stated that she had five names for Mayor and Council to review for the committee, the names consist of Nancy Purvis, Tracy Davis, Belinda Chappell, Rose Adams, and Denise Rountree. Adams stated that if Mayor and Council had any names they would like to add to the Committee they should submit them to Council.

DEPARTMENT REQUEST:

FY2008 Cost of Living Increase for City Employees (City Manager)

City Manager Jonathan Sumner stated that in August of 2007 a three percent cost of living increase was awarded to City employees. Sumner stated that it is time for the cost of living increase for 2008, that this increase is a raise to the employees that is budgeted for each year. Mayor Pro Tem Adams stated that she was concerned with the amount of increase in the weekly payroll. Sumner responded that he would have that information ready by the Council meeting on Thursday night. Councilman Clendenin stated that he was concerned with whether the amount of increase was based on the gross payroll or the net payroll. City Manager Sumner responded that this amount was based on the net amount of payroll.

Attendance at Georgia Rural Water Training Conference (Director Warren)

Public Works Director Donnie Warren stated his request to Mayor and Council to attend the Georgia Rural Water Training in Helen Georgia during October 26th through October 28th, 2008.

City Clerk's / Finance Clerk's Training in Athens Georgia (City Clerk)

Interim City Clerk Belinda Chappell stated request to Mayor and Council for attendance at the Georgia Municipal and County Clerk's / Finance Officers Education Program during September 14th through September 17th 2008.

Chappell stated that the classes would benefit both herself and the Finance Clerk Paula Stone by attending these classes. Chappell stated that by attending these classes she is working toward getting 100 hours to be a certified City Clerk to better serve the City of Hahira.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Mayor, Wayne Bullard

Interim City Clerk, Belinda Chappell

**CITY OF HAHIRA
COUNCIL MEETING
AUGUST 7, 2008
7:30 P.M.
COURTHOUSE**

PRESENT: Mayor Wayne Bullard, Councils: Mayor Pro Tem Adams, Terry Benjamin, Ralph Clendenin, Bruce Cain, City Manager Jonathan Sumner, Police Chief Terry Davis, Fire Chief Dwight Bennett, Director Donnie Warren, City Attorney Rob Plumb, Interim City Clerk Belinda Chappell.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Wayne Bullard

ESTABLISH QUORUM: Mayor Wayne Bullard

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Wayne Bullard

INVOCATION: City Manager Jonathan Sumner

REVIEW/CORRECTION OF MINUTES:

June 30, 2008 Work Session

July 3, 2008 Council Meeting

July 31, 2008 First Millage Rate Public Hearing

July 31, 2008 Second Millage Rate Public Hearing

Mayor Wayne Bullard asked for a motion to accept the minutes. **Mayor Pro Tem Adams made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Councilman Ralph Clendenin, vote was unanimous.**

REVIEW OF BILLS/BUDGET OVERAGES:

Mayor Bullard asked if there were any questions concerning the bills. Mayor Pro Tem Adams stated that she had questions concerning the bills, Adams stated the Finance Clerk answered any questions she had.

Mayor Bullard asked for a motion to accept the bills. **Councilman Cain made a motion to accept the bills, seconded by Councilman Terry Benjamin, vote was unanimous.**

PUBLIC HEARING:

Third Public Hearing to Set Millage Rate (City Manager)

City Manager Jonathan Sumner stated to Mayor and Council a break down tax sheet that explained the current millage rate at 0.00538 on homes with and without homestead exemption and the proposed millage rate increase of 0.00588 on homes with and without homestead exemption. Sumner stated State Laws require the advertisement of the Public Hearing. Sumner also stated the three Public Hearings were advertised in the Valdosta Daily Times. Sumner stated the first two Public Hearings were held on July 31, 2008 at 11:30 A.M. and 6:30 P.M. at City Hall and this was the third Public Hearing. City Manager Sumner stated the differences Hahira citizens would expect to pay, between the current millage rate and the proposed millage rate increase. Sumner stated the reason for the proposed millage increase was associated with the rising cost of the economy which had an effect on the budget. Sumner stated that with the proposed millage increase it would bring an additional \$20,000 dollars into the budget, without the increase in millage, the budget would have to be cut in certain areas.

Councilman Clendenin stated that he was concerned with what the tax digest was for the City. City Manager Sumner stated that the proposed tax digest growth for 2007 and 2008 is approximately \$80 million dollars. Sumner stated that if the millage rate holds constant, the tax digest received would be approximately \$263 thousand dollars.

Mayor Bullard asked if there was anyone wishing to speak against the millage rate increase.

Eldon Moore residing at 403 E. Stanfill Street Hahira, 31632. Mr. Moore came to address the Mayor and Council regarding the millage rate increase. He stated he was concerned with what the City was going to do in future years when the housing market comes to a minimum. City Manager Sumner responded that the growth digest was the growth in the appraised value of real estate, not just the new homes but the older homes as well. Mr. Moore stated he was concerned with what the City was going to do about lowering the budget. City Manager Sumner responded that measures had been taken to decrease the budget by suspending all large capital expenditures as well as eliminating unfilled positions in certain departments. Mr. Moore also asked what the City was doing about cutting back on the gas usage for departments. Fire Chief Bennett responded that the Fire Department was testing a bio-diesel program and the department was saving over a dollar a gallon, trying to take every measure possible to conserve money for the City.

Lee Isaacson residing at 1038 Stanfill Street Hahira 31632. Mrs. Isaacson came to address the Mayor and Council regarding the millage rate increase. She stated she was concerned with the increase in gas prices and the economy rising, that she could not afford a tax increase. She stated she was concerned with who was getting a pay increase if the millage rate was raised, that the Hahira citizens needed a break. She stated that something else could be cut rather than raising the taxes of the citizens.

Mayor Bullard asked if there was anyone wishing to speak in favor of raising the millage rate.

Wilmon Stanley residing at 308 S. Washington Street, Hahira 31632. Mr. Stanley came to address the Mayor and Council on the millage rate increase. Mr. Stanley stated with the increase of the population in Hahira and the number of houses being built, if the citizens wished to continue the services being provided, he was in favor of raising the millage rate. He stated this was a small increase that the citizens would be paying for the services that the City of Hahira was providing.

Gary Rake residing at Redbird Place Hahira 31632. Mr. Rake came to address the Mayor and Council regarding the millage rate increase. Mr. Rake stated he had lived in Hahira for two years and felt that his family was in good hands. He stated the proposed millage rate was a small increase and the City of Hahira was a great City and felt that the services that are provided are excellent. He stated he was willing to pay a small price to continue the services he was being provided.

Karen Camion residing at 405 W. Stanfill Street Hahira 31632. Ms. Camion addressed Mayor and Council that she was concerned with when the last time the taxes was raised in the City of Hahira. Mayor Bullard stated that the City has lowered taxes more than they have increased them. She stated that with the increase in the economy, the cost of living has increased for households as well as trying to run a City and that she is in favor of increasing the millage rate.

Mike Bryant residing at 405 W. Stanfill Street Hahira 31632. Mr. Bryant addressed Mayor and Council regarding the millage rate increase. He stated that Hahira citizens had been fortunate in the past regarding the increase in millage rate. Mr. Bryant stated that cities around Hahira was increasing taxes constantly in order to maintain the services that were provided. He stated that the City of Hahira had some excellent employees, and they were the lowest paid employees in comparison to surrounding cities. Mr. Bryant stated he was in favor of raising the millage rate to continue receiving the services that have been provided to him.

Freeman Rivers residing at 204 S. Hall Street Hahira 31632. Mr. Rivers addressed Mayor and Council regarding the millage rate increase. He stated that if the City had to increase the millage rate due to the growth of the new homes being built, he thought the increase was worth paying for. He stated if the increase would help to build the new fire station, he was in favor of raising the millage rate.

Quida Lane residing at 210 Randall Street Hahira 31632. Mrs. Lane addressed Mayor and Council on the issue of raising the millage rate. She stated she was in favor of raising the millage rate. She stated that with the City growing at the rate it was growing, the millage rate needed to be increased.

Lawanna Benjamin residing at 539 Hall Street Hahira 31632. Mrs. Benjamin addressed Mayor and Council on the millage rate increase. She stated that the City needed to increase the millage, the reason being, if she called for help at her home, she wanted to know that she would receive services that she deserved. Mrs. Benjamin was in favor of raising the millage rate for Hahira.

City Manager Jonathan Sumner stated to Mayor and Council a copy of the FY2009 draft one budget was prepared and available to citizens at City Hall if they would like to request a copy.

Mayor Pro Tem Adams stated she had reviewed the draft one budget and she stated there were areas in the budget that could be cut and still give the citizens the same services they are receiving from the City. Mayor Pro Tem Adams was opposed to raising the millage rate.

Councilman Clendenin stated he had spoken to several citizens and they are opposed to raising the millage rate. He stated there are areas that could be cut in the budget rather than ask the citizens to pay higher taxes. Councilman Clendenin was opposed to the millage increase.

Councilman Benjamin stated each year it was getting more difficult knowing the City was only putting a certain amount of money in the budget for the departments and expect the department heads to continue to run their departments the way it should be ran. Councilman Benjamin stated the millage rate was held constant for the last ten years and has not been raised. He stated with the economy constantly rising, the proposed millage rate increase was a small price to pay to continue receiving the services the citizens deserve. He stated he was in favor of raising the millage rate.

Councilman Cain stated there were areas in the budget that could be cut, he also stated he did not want to cut services the citizens are receiving just to keep from raising the millage rate. Councilman Cain stated to be able to keep the services the Fire Department, the Police Department, as well as, the Public Works Department he was in favor of raising the millage rate.

Mayor Bullard asked for a motion to accept the millage rate increase. **Councilman Benjamin made a motion to accept the increase as requested, seconded by Councilman Cain. Mayor Bullard asked for all in favor, Councilman Benjamin and Councilman Cain were in favor. Mayor Bullard asked for all opposed, Mayor Pro Tem Adams and Councilman Clendenin were opposed.** Mayor Bullard stated with the economy rising, the last thing he wanted to do was to have the citizens pay higher taxes. Mayor Bullard stated this was not a high increase in the millage rate. Mayor Bullard stated that if the millage rate was not increased, eventually it would have to be raised two mills instead of raising a half a mill, due to not raising the taxes in the past ten years. Mayor Bullard stated there were things in the budget that could be cut this year. **Mayor Bullard opposed, motion was defeated, millage rate was set to remain at the current rate of 0.00538.**

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

Freeman Rivers residing at 204 S. Hall Street Hahira 31632. Mr. Rivers addressed Mayor and Council, he was concerned with the recycling issue on Union Road. Mr. Rivers also stated he was concerned about the Ethics Committee and when the term of the committee ended. Mayor Bullard responded on the recycling issue, he stated he had spoken to County Commissioner Edgar Roberts and he was in the process of setting up a meeting to resolve the issue.

Wilmon Stanley residing at 308 S. Washington Street Hahira 31632. Mr. Stanley addressed Mayor and Council, he stated he was concerned about the recycling center on Union Road, that if something wasn't done to resolve this issue, the City would have to provide this service to the citizens of Hahira and that would be of cost to citizens. Mayor Bullard responded that the City would pick up yard debris for an additional cost of \$25 dollars to the citizens.

DISCUSSIONS:

A.) LARP 2008 Priority List (City Manager)

City Manager Jonathan Sumner stated to Mayor and Council the LARP list was due before the end of the month. Sumner stated there was a new street that was added to the list to be paved, Stanfill Street from Hagan Bridge to Highway 122. Councilman Clendenin stated he was concerned on how LARP prioritizes the street to be paved. Mayor Bullard responded with LARP had a map of all the streets on the priority list. Mayor Bullard asked for a motion to accept the LARP list. **Councilman Clendenin made a motion to accept the list, seconded by Councilman Cain, vote was unanimous.**

B. – J. (Removed)

K.) Appointment of Members to the Beautification Committee (Mayor Pro Tem Adams)

Mayor Pro Tem Adams stated to Mayor and Council she had a list of people to add to the Beautification Committee, these included Nancy Purvis, Tracy Davis, Rose Adams, Belinda Chappell, Denise Roundtree, and Sandra Warren. City Manager Sumner asked Mayor Pro Tem Adams if she would consider adding Emily Grace Newkirk to the Committee. Mayor Pro Tem Adams responded if Mrs. Newkirk was willing to serve, the Committee would be glad to have her. Councilman Clendenin was concerned if the Committee was strictly volunteers. Mayor Pro Tem Adams responded the Committee was strictly volunteers. Mayor Bullard asked for a motion. **Councilman Clendenin made a motion to accept the list of names, seconded by Councilman Benjamin, vote was unanimous.**

DEPARTMENT REQUESTS:

FY 2008 Cost of Living Increase for City Employees (City Manager)

City Manager Jonathan Sumner stated to Mayor and Council a prepared breakdown sheet to explain the Cost of Living Allocation (COLA). Sumner stated every year there was an option for Mayor and Council to grant a cost of living increase to employees. Sumner stated sometimes the increase is more than three percent and sometimes is less than three percent. Sumner stated the cost of living increase estimate per week was \$300 dollars, this was based on the three percent increase of the net payroll each week, not the gross payroll. Sumner stated that Mayor Bullard asked for the increase to be recalculated based on the gross weekly payroll. Sumner stated the percentage would be greater because it was based on the gross and this amount would be around \$400 dollars weekly, which is a \$100 dollar difference per week. Sumner stated there was money in the budget to satisfy this cost of living increase to employees. Sumner stated the total amount budgeted on personnel salaries for this year was \$1,043,281 dollars. Sumner stated that as of July 31, 2008 the amount expended was \$529,131.40 dollars. Sumner stated that if the amount that has been expended so far was divided on a monthly basis you would arrive at \$44,094.28 dollars, this was the amount the City could expect to pay on a monthly basis for gross payroll. The three percent COLA calculated on this figure was \$1,322.83, this figure was three percent of the \$44,094.28. Sumner stated the total payroll for the last five months of 2008 would be \$227,085.55 if the COLA was approved. Sumner stated this amount does exist in the 2008 budget. Mayor Pro Tem Adams stated she was concerned about last August COLA approved increase, would this increase go through to next August 2009. City Manager Sumner stated this COLA increase would be for August 2008 through August 2009. Mayor Pro Tem Adams was concerned if the City had enough money in the budget to approve this increase. Sumner responded that the City does have the money in the budget for the COLA increase.

Mayor Bullard asked for a motion to approve the COLA increase. **Mayor Pro Tem Adams made a motion, seconded by Councilman Clendenin, vote was unanimous.**

Attendance at Georgia Rural Water Training Conference (Director Warren)

Director Donnie Warren stated to Mayor and Council he would like to attend the Georgia Rural Water Conference in Helen Georgia. Councilman Clendenin was concerned with the cost of this training. Director Warren stated the cost would be around \$850 dollars. Mayor Bullard asked for a motion. **Councilman Clendenin made a motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Adams, vote was unanimous.**

City Clerk's / Finance Clerk's Training in Athens Georgia (City Clerk)

Interim City Clerk Belinda Chappell stated to Mayor and Council her request to attend the City Clerk/ Finance Clerk training in Athens on September 14-17, 2008. Chappell stated this would give her the opportunity to work toward her 100 hours to be a certified City Clerk as well as our Finance Clerk, Paula Stone will have the opportunity to start obtaining her hours in the finance training class. Mayor Bullard stated his request to attend an Ethics class in Athens on these same dates. **Mayor Bullard asked for a motion. Councilman Benjamin made a motion, seconded by Councilman Cain, vote was unanimous.**

City Clerk's Luncheon August 12, 2008 (City Clerk)

Interim City Clerk Belinda Chappell stated to Mayor and Council her request to host the Clerk's Luncheon on August 12, 2008 at 12 P.M. in honor of Diane Bellflower. Chappell stated Police Chief Davis would be speaking on the topic of Identity Theft. Mayor Bullard asked for a motion. **Councilman Clendenin made a motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Adams, vote was unanimous.**

REPORTS:

Councilman Clendenin thanked everyone for attending the meeting, also all Council members for working hard, he thanked all the department heads and also thanked Belinda Chappell for a job well done.

Councilman Cain thanked everyone for showing up, he expressed his disappointment in the outcome of the millage rate increase and as always, he thanked all the employees for doing a great job.

Councilman Benjamin thanked everyone for attending the meeting, he stated his disappointment in the millage rate increase outcome and stated it gets tougher each year to work with the budget that was given. He thanked all the departments for the hard work they do everyday.

Mayor Pro Tem Adams stated the Courthouse and City Hall needed to be looked at because of termite damage. She also stated the window blinds needed to be replaced in certain areas of the City buildings. She also stated money needed to be spent on the City streets for repair.

City Manager Sumner thanked the Council for the opportunity to serve and thanked all the department heads for the tremendous job they continue to do as well as the City staff. He thanked Belinda Chappell for stepping in, with the passing of Diane Bellflower, and

doing a great job. He thanked Paula Stone for coming into her own position and doing a fine job for the City. He thanked everyone for everything they have done and expressed that it had been a pleasure working for the City of Hahira.

Mayor Bullard thanked everyone for showing up in support of the tax increase. He thanked all the dedicated employees of the City and expressed his appreciation.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mayor Bullard asked for a motion to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel. **Councilman Benjamin made a motion, seconded by Councilman Cain, vote was unanimous.**

Mayor Bullard asked for a motion to come out of executive session and enter back into the regular meeting. **Councilman Benjamin made a motion to exit executive session and enter back into the regular meeting and authorize the Mayor and Interim City Clerk to sign the affidavit certifying that the only thing discussed in executive session was personnel, seconded by Councilman Cain, vote was unanimous.**

Mayor Bullard asked for a motion to adjourn. **Mayor Pro Tem Adams made a motion, seconded by Councilman Clendenin, vote was unanimous.**

Meeting was adjourned at 10 P.M.

Mayor, Wayne Bullard

Interim City Clerk, Belinda Chappell

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