

**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL MEETING/BUDGET WORKSESSION**  
**MONDAY, APRIL 12, 2010**  
**9:30 AM**

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{Summary minutes of City Council meeting. Audio tapes of the meeting are on file and are included by reference as part of this meeting. An agenda of this meeting has been either mailed or made available to persons, organizations and local news media as per their request. The agenda gives the date, time and place of the meeting as well as the order of business. This disclosure is in compliance with the South Carolina Code of Laws of 1976, Section 30-4-80 (e).}

A budget worksession was held on Monday, April 12, 2010 at 9:30 A.M. in the City Municipal building with the following present:

**COUNCIL:** Mayor Harold Thompson; Mayor Pro Tem Keith Henderson; Councilmembers Tommie Hill, Sr., Robert Garner, Ricky Todd Harris and Andy Bailey.

**DEPARTMENTAL STAFF:** Gloria Rogers – Municipal Clerk/Personnel Director; Sam White, - Captain, Perry Harmon – Public Service Director; Joe Nichols – Utility Director; Walker Gallman – Finance Director ; Mike Petrie – Maintenance Shop Director; Laura Hembree – Accounting Supervisor; Brian Blackwell – Building Official and Melissa Youngblood – Media Technology Coordinator.

**NEWS MEDIA:** Nathan Christopher - Union Times, Steve Ramsey – WBCU, Graham Williams – Union County News

**OTHERS:** None

Mayor Thompson called the meeting to order and gave the invocation.

Finance Director Walker Gallman states that during the previous budget worksession, he asked department heads to go back and take a look at their department's budget and try to reduce by 5%. The general fund budget has been reduced by 4%. Solid Waste Management has been reduced by 5%. The combined utility fund is up 1% over last years' budget.

The Finance Director discussed the way Community Change funds are distributed. If the applicants do not participate in the Community Change Program, then they will not receive any funding through the Salvation Army or Carolina Community Action. There is a 39% participation in the Community Change Program.

Outside agencies were reviewed. Their funding request has been reduced by 5%. The American Red Cross has been offered office space rather than funding. Union County Tourism Commission will be funded through the hospitality tax.

Chief Sam White reviewed the Public Safety Department's budget. He presented a list of revised budget request.

- Eliminate all Public Safety Ads
- Eliminate purchase and monthly charges for 18 new GPS units
- Drop memberships to SC Law Enforcement Officers Association except for the Chief & Captains
- Eliminate purchase of animal control equipment (City will meet with County Council on this item)
- Reduce office furniture request
- Reduce firefighter gear replacement
- Withdraw from participation in Public Safety Day (Will fund FY210 but not FY 2011; take a look at it in subsequent years)

- Reduce training
- Reduce travel & business
- Withdraw request for light tower discussed at budget worksession

Chief White also discussed proposed additional cuts that need consideration and discussion.

- Increase the fee charged for off-duty work. Currently the City charges \$21.00 per hour/per officer for off-duty work. He is proposing the fee be increased to at least \$25.00 per hour/per officer.
- Public Safety Day will not be funded.
- July 4<sup>th</sup> at Foster Park will not be funded.
- Special Events such as “Halloween on Main, Christmas Downtown Open House, and the “Taste of Union” will continue to be funded.
- Furlough Days was discussed but was not considered.
- Funeral blocks were discussed; the Chief will meet with Sheriff and Funeral Homes regarding direction on the subject
- Criminal records background check is presently free, a \$6 charge is proposed

The general administrative budget is up 3.27%. Legislative has been reduced by 4.01% over last years budget. City Court had decreased 10%. City Attorney budget is down 7.24%. Union Connection has decreased 5.73%. A funding request has been made to the County to assist with Channel 14 budget.

Public Service Director Perry Harmon reviewed the Public Service Department. His department’s budget is down 5.91%. He also discussed Solid Waste Management.

The Planning Department’s budget has been reduced by \$20,000 due to the elimination of computer software upgrade. Inspection fees were discussed. Brian Blackwell will research and bring back to Council as to what other cities are charging for fees.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Henderson to authorize Mr. Blackwell to research inspection fees from other cities and bring back to Council for their consideration.

**SECOND** by Councilmember Garner.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Finance Director Walker Gallman discussed the general fund summary. He recommends using fund balance to balance budget. He also discussed increasing the garbage fee by \$1.00. It will generate \$49,000 a year and to continue the transfer of \$130,000.

Mayor Thompson states that he received a call from a member of “The Good Neighbor Garden Club” of Union. They made a request to display the Blue Star Memorial Highway marker at Foster Park near the gazebo honoring Veterans. It was the consensus of council to approve the request.

Mayor Thompson made a request to change the April 20, 2010 regular council meeting from 6:30 P.M. to 9:30 A.M.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Bailey to approve request.

**SECOND** by Councilmember Harris.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Utility Director Joe Nichols reviewed the Utility Department. Electric rates will remain the same for FY2011. Security lights will increase 5% per year. Water rates need to be increased 38% but a 9.5% increase is proposed. Sewer rates need to be increased by 107%, but like water, a 9.5 % increase is proposed.

The Finance Director discussed the summary of proposed fees and utility rate increases.

- 1 cent hospitality and accommodations fees
- \$1 increase to SWM - \$49,000 per year

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- Water & sewer rates – 9.5% increase by volume
- Increase the monthly security light charge by 5%
- Building fees – implement the National Standard for determining the permit fee for new construction
- Continue the rate study of all utilities

Other Considerations:

- Cap transfer from utility & SWM at current levels
- Authorize Mayor to look at alternative work schedules to work more efficient & provide better customer service
- Cut fuel usage by 10%
- Require all vehicles & equipment be evaluated by Maintenance Director before being replaced
- Freeze hiring – evaluate each vacant position before rehiring to determine need
- Discuss with County the possibility of combining Building Inspection Department
- Authorize staff to continue the process to close Meng Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant and apply for a State Revolving Loan

Finance Director discussed personnel changes:

- Additions – P/T WW Treatment Operator
- Losses – WW Treatment Operator
- No cost of living increase proposed
- Employees will see a 9.5% health insurance increase beginning January 1, 2011

Mayor Thompson gave an update of Union Arts Center. He met with Attorney Margaret Pope in Newberry recently to discuss funding.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Garner to go out of regular session into executive session to discuss a personnel matter.

**SECOND** by Councilmember Henderson.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

No action taken.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Bailey to go out of executive session back into regular session.

**SECOND** by Councilmember Harris.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**MOTION** by Councilmember Bailey to adjourn.

**SECOND** by Councilmember Harris.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Budget worksession adjourned at 1:30 pm.

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Gloria J. Rogers, Municipal Clerk

Minutes approved \_\_\_\_\_ 2010

