

**MINUTES
COUNCIL WORKSHOP
THURSDAY, MAY 29, 2014
12:00 NOON**

{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 council workshop was held on May 29, 2014 at 12:00 noon in the City Municipal building with the following present:

COUNCIL: Mayor Harold Thompson, Mayor Pro Tem Robert Garner, Councilmembers Tommie L. Hill, Yates Giles, Ricky Todd Harris, and Jim Wilson. Councilmember Ruff was absent due to illness.

DEPARTMENTAL STAFF: Gloria Rogers, Municipal Clerk/Personnel Director; Walker Gallman – Finance Director; Laura Hembree – Accounting Supervisor; and Joe Nichols – Utility Director.

NEWS MEDIA: Graham Williams – Union County News; Derrick Vanderford – Union Times and Mike Stevens – WBCU.

OTHERS: Bob Love, Mary Ann Miller and Curtiss Hunter.

1. Call To Order

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

2. Business

A. Union Events Center

Mayor Thompson states that the workshop is being held to discuss whether City Council wants to participate in a bridge loan for the Union Events Center and to discuss other funding options.

Bob Love, Chairman of the Union Events Center Committee addressed Council. Mr. Love gave a recap of the funds that they have on hand which includes money raised, total contributions and how much has been spent thus far. There is \$1,560,934 of City's money left from the original seed money. Also there is \$255,000 in Timken donations for lighting and a sound system for the Events Center in the City's account. Mr. Hart states that there is a \$226,787 funding request to the Timken Foundation. Per Bob Hart, the Foundation wants to see activity on the Events Center before they honor the request. Next Mr. Love gave an update on what is in the Events Center's account. There is \$231,668 in the account. There is \$957,442 in pledges to be collected. Total pledges in hand are \$1,189,000. Cash plus pledges totaling \$3,231,863 need to be updated by about \$26,000. There are a couple of pledges that were not captured in the numbers. The gross amount to build the Union Events Center totals \$3,258,000. The bid for the Events Center will need to be updated. The lowest bid in April 2010 was 2.1 million dollars. Mr. Love states that the Events Center Committee will continue their fund raising efforts.

Mr. Love state that plans for the Events Center will also need to be brought up to code. Mr. Love asked council if they could go back and re-bid the Union Events Center as drawn because of inflation.

Next Mayor Thompson discussed options such as a bridge loan if there is not enough cash on hand to fund the project or incorporate the “Super 10” building for the Events Center. The Mayor polled council regarding re-bidding the Union Events Center.

Mr. Love informed council that there is a possibility the Union Events Center may lose pledges if the project is re-bid or if the “Super 10” building is incorporated as the Union Events Center.

It was the consensus of council to place the re-bidding of the Union Events Center on the agenda for council’s approval at the June regular council meeting.

Finance Director Walker Gallman states that the City should engage Architect David Langley before the council meeting to get his views on re-bidding the project. Mr. Gallman also states that if council decides to participate in a bridge loan for the Union Events Center, the City’s Bond Attorneys will need to be involved.

3. ADJOURNMENT:

Council workshop adjourned at 12:45 P.M.

Gloria J. Rogers, Municipal Clerk

Minutes Approved _____ 2014

The last time the Union Events Center was put out to bid, the estimated cost came in at \$3,093,732. That was in April of 2010. The difference between then and now was a portion of the discussion that occurred Thursday during a City Council workshop session. Events Center Committee Chairman Bob Love addressed the group with updates on where the proposed project stands to be Total is \$3,231,863 That's \$138,131 more than the 2010 bid, but the consensus was with the old bid being four years old, today's construction cost would be more. When Mayor Harold Thompson polled the council, they all agreed the project needs to be rebid. To put the rebidding process in action, it will have to be voted on by the whole council at the next regular meeting. Love appeared anxious to get the project moving because in his words, "Some folks are getting antsy." He was referring to a proposed grant from the Timken Foundation that, if it comes to pass, will amount to \$226,787, an amount already being included in the total budget figures. Love was pleased the council agreed to the rebidding process.

The next hurdle the committee will have to confront is what is called a bridge loan. That means when construction begins, money will have to be paid out to contractors, and since much of the pledge money will be received over a five-year period, there is not enough actual cash on hand to fund the project. In all likelihood, the city would be asked to fund or bridge the project and be reimbursed by the yet-to-be-received pledge money. Love said that over the five-year period, they expect to collect 94-95% of the pledges. In general, the council did not seem to warm to the bridge loan idea, with Councilman Yates Giles commenting, "A bridge loan scares me to death." There was also some discussion about using what is known as the old Super 10 building for the Events Center. While admitting that it was not out of the realm of possibility, Love said that is not what was sold to those who made the pledges.

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\$500,000 in revenues. The total cost for the City of Fountain Inn to operate the facility is anywhere from \$150,000 to \$250,000. Mr. Broad states that last week they signed a 1.5 million dollar pledge from one donor. He feels this has happened because the City invested in itself. There are also other donors that have made pledges to the Center. Also the facility has had a big impact on the downtown area. Their buildings are about 95% occupied over being 60% vacant five years ago. Mr. Broad opened the floor for questions from City Council regarding their Center. Lastly, Mr. Broad states that he is glad that they moved forward with their Center for Visual and Performing Arts instead of waiting on the economy to get better.

Next Mr. McLeer addressed City Council regarding the Mauldin Cultural Center. There was positive and negative feedback before the facility was renovated to the Mauldin Cultural Center. Since 2010 the Cultural Center has grown from about 10,000 visitors to 30,000 over the past five years. The Mauldin Cultural has grown from almost empty to an almost full venue. The Cultural Center has enhanced their community. Recently, the City of Mauldin approved the creation of a new Office of Cultural Affairs. This office is charged with managing and developing the cultural assets of the City such as promoting the arts in Mauldin and provides leadership, guidance and various resources to the cultural community in Mauldin. Mr. McLeer states that their overall job is to leverage the economic impact of the arts to improve the quality of life. Mr. McLeer opened the floor for questions from City Council.

B. HEALTHY LIVING INITIATIVE

Dr. Kristi Woodall, Superintendent of Union County Schools addressed City Council regarding a Healthy Living Initiative Program for Union County School's kindergarten students. This program is to integrate local farmers that are certified to provide locally grown products into schools. By providing the students with locally grown fruits and vegetable through hand-on-learning activities, this will promote healthy eating among kindergarten age students.