

**MINUTES  
BUDGET WORK SESSION  
TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2020  
4:00 PM**

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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 work session was held on Tuesday, March 31, 2020 at 4:00 pm in the City Municipal building with the following present:

**COUNCIL:** Mayor Harold Thompson; Mayor Pro Tem Robert Garner, Councilmembers Tommy Anthony, Vicki Morgan, Ricky Todd Harris, Pamela Sloss and Sonja Craig

**DEPARTMENTAL STAFF:** Gloria Rogers – Municipal Clerk/HR Director; Joe Nichols – City Administrator; Laura Hembree – Finance Director; Mark Brown – Utility Director; Sam White – Public Safety Director ; Robbie McGee – Captain and Jennifer Price – Purchasing Agent

**NEWS MEDIA:** None

Mayor Thompson called the meeting to order and gave the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was given by all. The roll was called by Municipal Clerk Gloria Rogers

**OTHERS:** None

Gloria Rogers, HR Director/Clerk gave budget presentation to City Council. Training remains a top priority and employees are urged to develop their work skills. Life & Safety Consultants are used to help curb the rising cost of worker's compensation insurance. Drug & Alcohol testing policy as well as random tests for all drivers who have CDL driver's license remains in place. SMIRF & SCMIT have partnered with LocalGovU, an online training provider specializing in training for local government was reviewed. SCMIT member's benefits were also reviewed. The Municipal Clerk/HR Director did a demonstration of the on-line risk management training. The City has 135 budgeted positions; full time employees – 129; part time employees – 6 and elected officials – 7. A wage & compensation study was implemented January 1, 2020. A general election will be held November 3, 2020 for the office of Mayor and City Council Districts 3, 4 and 6. The filing period will open on Wednesday, July 15<sup>th</sup>, at 12:00 noon and close on Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon. City Council passed 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of an ordinance to place a referendum on the November 3, 2020 ballot to allow the sale of on-premises alcoholic beverages and off-premises beer and wine in the City on Sundays. Councilmember Morgan asked if staff could look at reducing line item for Christmas decorations; advertisement; membership and travel in the Legislative/Personnel budget.

Debbie Woodard gave presentation for Main Street Junction. She states that before the Coronavirus, MSJ had 130 bookings; 27 of them were from April till June. She states that although there have been many events affected by the Covid-19 shut down, she has only had one request for a refund. The others are requesting that we hold the money and they are planning to reschedule. All reservation are frozen and postponed events will take precedence over new bookings. She is not accepting any payment for balances remaining for events that are in the near future at this time. She is handling this on a month by month basis. The MSJ has had many weddings, anniversaries, and birthday parties of every age and also Christmas gathering and family reunions. The venue rentals for the MSJ total was \$30,562 and the office rental was \$1,500. The conference room and the flex room has been used by several different companies. Debbie mentioned the

building next door would be an asset to the MSJ. She next states that in the past the City Council has graciously added the MSJ monies from the Hospitality & Accommodations Tax Account. Areas that have occupied the Junction are Gaffney, Rock Hill, Clinton, Laurens, Spartanburg, Myrtle Beach and Texas. Lastly Debbie mentioned the present slogan for MSJ, "Junction For Your Function" that she wants to change to "Follow Me to MSJ" and get T-Shirts made. Councilmember Morgan asked for budget cuts for this department.

Public Safety Director Sam White gave his presentation. He reviewed the personnel and organizational chart and vacant slots in his department. City Council discussed the number of employees in his department of whether they have enough PSO's on the road and also the vacant Fireman slots. They also discussed incentives to hire and maintain PSO's. Chief White states that once an officer is trained and gets 2 to 3 years of experience; they go to other agencies that are looking for officers because other agencies make promises and make positions look more attractive, especially for the younger officers. Also they have more positions available. Next he discussed the number of calls for law enforcement, fire, and transport of mental patients and cases assigned to investigations. He also discussed equipment requests for Public Safety below:

- Restraint Devices - \$23,500
- (8) Equipped Portable Radios - \$20,000
- (4) SCBA Devices - \$36,000
- (18) In-Car Laptops (lease) & Docking Stations - \$54,900
- (30) Downtown/Foster Park Cameras - \$45,000

Chief White showed a short video demonstrating the BOLA Wrap Restraint.

Laura Hembree, Finance Director presented the Finance & Utility Billing budget. She reviewed the organizational chart of employees. The Finance Department has an operating budget of \$508,890 for FY 2020. The department currently has five (5) employees. The Utility Billing Department has an operating budget of \$719,170 and currently has (8) employees. Other items discussed:

- Utility Payment Options – City Hall, Mail, Credit Card, Automatic Bank Draft or Online
- Debt Setoff Program
- Red Flag
- Deposits

There is an increase of \$4,450 to lease the second half of the department's PC's, and to cover the increase in postage and additional tax notices for FY 2021.

The Finance Director and City Council briefly discussed future utility payment issues for customers after Governor McMaster's Executive Order not to cut off utilities expires.

Utilities Director Mark Brown addressed Council. He discussed critical issues for the Utility Division.

- # 1 - There is too many numbers for City service and emergencies. Most places find some way to have one central dispatch number. It does not have to be the same person all the time. His suggestion is to have a Gatekeeper who dispatches all City calls. We need somebody to intercept travel to guide people and to direct people similar to an information desk. This person would take all the calls, except for utility billing. The central number will need to be advertised, such as putting the number on all City trucks, etc. He does not see a monetary cost to do that. After hours, that Gatekeeper would transfer that number to the water plant, but it would be the same number that you call. The Utilities Director states that he would love to head up the project to get this together and it is very possible that we have that position already working for us.

Councilmember Morgan states that she agrees with the suggestion

#2 - The Utilities Director presented Council with an amended bulk waste pick up policy but the policy will need to be enforced in order for the Public Service Director and his crew's ability to get things done. There is 10 to 15% wasted time because of policies not being enforced. The current policy is vague and is not being enforced. He states that he likes the idea of having a cleanup/fixup week once or twice a year. Large volume of trash will be picked up at no additional charge during this time. He discussed the trash cart policy. He suggested charging a \$50 replacement cart fee to any customer that damages their cart outside of normal use. The Utility Director asked Council to review bulk waste policy handout to see what recommendations they would like to see implemented July 1, 2020.

#3 - His last critical issue discussed was Public Service Director's Department facility. His recommendation is not buy any more equipment for this department as long as they do not have facilities to store it in. Equipment that they have now is sitting outside. He states that he sees in the City's 5-year capital improvement plan that there is money in the budget for a new facility and it is costing the City money to have equipment sitting out in the elements.

The City Administrator states that the only thing that the City will spend money on is an emergency situation at the river. There are two motor control centers that are obsolete that need to be replaced. Cost will be around \$70,000 and the cost of hiring an electrician. Also he states that there will not be any capital improvements; just continuing projects already in process.

Councilmember Morgan states that Council needs to be made aware of emergency spending at all times.

The City Administrator states that he went through budget cuts in each department.

Next the Finance Director discussed updates for budget considerations:

- Outside agencies reduced by \$73,540
- City Court line reduced
- Hospitality & Accommodations funding reduced
- Main Street Junction reduced by \$30,000
- Union County Radio Station billing reduced to \$10,000
- (18) In-Car Laptops (lease) & Docking Stations - \$30,320
- (4) Restraint Devices - \$5,000

Councilmember Harris asked about numbers being put on road signs. The City Administrator states that he would check on this.

Next the Main Street Junction was discussed. The budget will be cut \$30,000.

The City Administrator discussed the tennis courts at Foster Park. He states that they are not playable. People have been asking about playing tennis there. The courts have been put out for bid. The Finance Director states that this does qualify for the Hospitality & Accommodations Tax.

Councilmember Harris recommends putting (2) fountains in the middle of the pond at Foster Park with lights. This will be taken into consideration. Also he states that Foster Park may need more lights. Some of the areas are very dark.

**MOTION** by Mayor Pro Tem Garner to go out of regular session into executive session to discuss personnel matter

**SECOND** by Councilmember Craig

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**MOTION** by Councilmember Sloss to go out of executive session into regular session

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**SECOND** by Councilmember Craig  
**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

No action taken

**MOTION** by Mayor Pro Tem Garner to adjourn  
**SECOND** by Councilmember Sloss  
**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

The next budget work session will be held Monday, April 6, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

Budget work session adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

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Gloria J. Rogers, Certified Municipal Clerk

Minutes approved \_\_\_\_\_ 2020