

**MINUTES  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2013  
6:30 P.M.**

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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).}

The regular meeting of City Council was held on Tuesday, August 20, 2013 at 6:30 P.M. in the City Municipal Building with the following present:

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

**CITY ATTORNEY:** None

**DEPARTMENTAL STAFF:** Gloria Rogers, Municipal Clerk/Personnel Director; Sam White, - Public Safety Director; Joe Nichols – Utility Director; Perry Harmon – Public Service Director; Sam White – Public Safety Director; Mike Petrie – Maintenance Shop Director; Walker Gallman – Finance Director and Laura Hembree – Accounting Supervisor.

**NEWS MEDIA:** Mike Stevens – WBCU, Derik Vanderford – Union Times, Graham Williams – Union County and Kim Kimzey – Spartanburg Herald.

**OTHERS:** Robby Moody, Jami Trammell, Vic Taus, Diane Taus, Dennis Millwood, Kelly Shropshire, Curtiss Hunter, Monte Lancaster, Tommy Anthony, Donna Anthony, John Parris, Joanne Parris, Peggy Waller, Rebecca Lance, James Canupp, Gator Hudson, Thom White, David O’Shields, Kathy O’Shields, Brookes Carwile, Ann White, Will Boyles, Ben Powles, Marsha Jordan, Michael Small, Ronnie McNease, Andrena Powell-Baker, Torance Inman, Freddie Bates, Barbara Rippy, Martha P. Whitener, Jack Kelly, Linda Kelly, Kathy Stepp, Jim Stepp, J.D. McCarley, George Bruce, Gregg Parker, Bob Love, Connie Springs, David Owens, Shannon Austin, Howard Gibson, Amy Knox, Bobby Davis, Robert Small, Hope Small, Nixon Small, Sara Wade, Roger Wade, Tom Wade, Pete Berry, Charles Lott, Michelle Cody, George Anne Osborne and others.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2. MINUTES**

- |                           |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| A. Tuesday, July 16, 2013 | Regular Council Meeting |
| B. Tuesday, July 23, 2013 | City Council Workshop   |

**MOTION** by Mayor Pro Tem Garner to approve minutes.

**SECOND** by Councilmember Harris.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**3. COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Monthly Reports

**MOTION** by Councilmember Giles to accept monthly reports.  
**SECOND** by Mayor Pro Tem Garner.  
**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. Retirement Recognition – Tommy Anthony

Utility Director Joe Nichols recognized Tommy Anthony for 27 years of faithful service to the City of Union.

C. Building & Zoning, Uniquely Union & Events Center – Howard Gibson

Howard Gibson addressed City Council. He first thanked Mayor and Council for allowing him to speak on the agenda. Mr. Gibson spoke about the Uniquely Union Festival stating that he supports the event and he will cook at the event; however, he is against the City of Union funding Uniquely Union in the amount of \$30,000 over last year's funding of \$1,000. He feels that the town is not financially able to support the event in that amount. Mr. Gibson commended the people the Uniquely Union Festival Committee and hope that there is a good turnout of people. Next he spoke on the Events Center. Mr. Gibson states that he is not against the Event Center nor is his group. He feels that the City cannot afford the Events Center or the upkeep on the proposed building. He also states that Bob Love and Gregg Parker spoke to his group. The group discussed parking and there was a question of whether an engineered drawing of the parking exists. The group is highly concerned about parking. Mr. Gibson feels that the Union Events Center will cost the taxpayers. He next spoke about the City of Union Building Department. Mr. Gibson states that the City of Union's Building Inspector is Brian Blackwell who lives in Gaffney. Mr. Gibson made accusations against the Building Inspector and he also states that he does not approve of how the Building Department is being operated and had some bad experiences with his inspections. He feels that the City of Union needs a full-time building inspector. Also Mr. Gibson does not approve of the City's building codes/ordinance.

Mayor Thompson presented information from SCLLR pertaining to Mr. Gibson not having a license and an "Order to Cease and Desist" dated April 30, 2013. Mr. Gibson challenged Mayor Thompson's information.

Mr. Gibson made a request to be put on next month's agenda.

D. Union Events Center Update – Bob Love & Gregg Parker

Bob Love gave Council a brief update on the progress of the Union Events Center. Mr. Love states that the budget has increased from 3.635 million to 3.835 million so that First Community expenses will be covered. The project has passed over the 3.4 million dollar mark which includes total cash pledges and in-kind service commitments. The gross amount to build the Event Center is 3.835 million. As stated before the campaign is divided into three divisions. The big industry division participation has been very successful. Three other large companies that the committee is now working with are AT&T, BMW and Duke. Mr. Love states that the Events Center will receive in the range of \$375,000 TO \$425,000 based on

what these companies have conveyed to him. The second division is the Leadership Division which is the Main Street businesses. The committee has had seventy contacts with this division and sixty-six appointments through the seventy contacts. The grass root portion of the campaign is called "Friends and Family". There have been four additional socials since the last update. These meetings are held to ask individuals to pledge to the Events Center. Mr. Love states that he is confident the committee will exceed its goal and is very thankful to the board and all of those who have helped.

**4. BUSINESS**

**A. AWARD BID – WATER PLANT IMPROVEMENTS**

Utility Director Joe Nichols states that a bid was received on August 2, 2013 at City Hall for replacing the filter consoles Touch Screen Displays at the Water Filter Plant. The quote includes installation of Hoffman consoles with touch screen displays, programming, start-up networking, and operator training. Nix, Purser & Associates is sole source provider of Interlusion, the proprietary software which supervises and controls the operations of the water filtration facility. The recommendation is to accept bid from Nix Purser & Associates, Inc. in the amount of \$151,595.60 plus tax and shipping charges, pending approval of funding provided through SC Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Program.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Wilson to accept bid.

**SECOND** by Mayor Pro Tem Garner.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**B. DISCUSSION/MOTION – PROPOSED CHANGES TO TEMPORARY SIGN REGULATIONS**

Robby Moody, Senior Planner at CRPC addressed City Council to discuss the background of the proposed changes to the temporary sign regulations of the Zoning Code. The City received some feedback from a local business owner who relies heavily on temporary signage to advertise her seasonal business. That department discussed options for amending the Zoning Code's sign regulations for temporary signs. Research was conducted on temporary sign regulations from a variety of Upstate municipalities. The request is to extend the term a temporary sign can be displayed from 15 days to 90 days; reduce the waiting period between temporary sign permits from 6 months to 30 days and increase the permit fee (effective July 1, 2014) from \$15 to \$1 per day, minimum of \$15 and maximum of \$90. Mr. Moody states that the next step would be to direct staff to advertise a public hearing with the Planning Commission to initiate text amendments to the Zoning Code.

**MOTION** by Mayor Pro Tem Garner to receive as information only.

**SECOND** by Councilmember Harris.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**C. DISCUSSION/MOTION – UPDATE ON BILLBOARD SECTION OF THE SIGN REGULATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT STRATEGY**

Mayor Thompson, along with Robby Moody discussed the Zoning Code that was amended in 2005 to amortize billboards citywide with a 5 year timeframe for compliance. Subsequent action by the SC legislative rendered this section unenforceable; therefore, existing billboards are legal non-conforming structures or "grandfathered". No new billboards can be erected. Staff held a

meeting August 12 for property owners to learn about the billboard section of the Zoning Code and their responsibilities related to maintenance of the sign and property. Staff will conduct a courtesy inspection of each billboard location after September 1, 2013 and will provide a written report with photographs to the property owner. In the event a billboard or property is in violation of the Zoning Code; the letter will outline a timeframe for making necessary repairs. A follow up inspection will be scheduled and enforcement will be taken, if needed.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Wilson to accept recommendation.

**SECOND** by Councilmember Harris.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

D. MOTION – TAKE FROM TABLE – DISCUSS/MOTION – PUBLIC SAFETY PATROL VEHICLE

Mayor Thompson states that on June 18, 2013 Item 4-A, Discussion/Motion-Public Safety Patrol Vehicle was placed on the table by Council. Council decided that if the Public Safety Department was under budget in the current fiscal year by the requested amount, council would consider funding the vehicle out of the 2012-2013 Public Safety Budget. The estimated cost for the vehicle is \$38,900.00. Council recommendation was to table the item until staff could reconcile the year end (June 30, 2013) and then bring back to table.

**MOTION** by Mayor Pro Tem Garner to remove from table.

**SECOND** by Councilmember Hill.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

E. DISCUSSION/MOTION – PUBLIC SAFETY PATROL VEHICLE

Chief Sam White addressed Council. During the 2013/2014 City of Union Budget Meeting, the Public Safety Department asked Council to consider adding one patrol vehicle to the fleet for the next six years. Several benefits were presented to Council in support of this request. Council decided that if the Public Safety Department was under budget in the current fiscal year by the requested amount, Council would consider funding the vehicle out of the 2012-2013 Public Safety Budget. The estimated costs for the vehicle are \$38,900.00. Staff recommendation is to proceed with purchase of police vehicle as discussed in Budget Work Session.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Wilson to approve staff recommendation.

**SECOND** by Councilmember Giles.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

F. DISCUSSION/MOTION – MARCH OF DIMES PARTNERSHIP COMMITMENT

Utility Director Joe Nichols addressed Council. He is speaking on behalf of Erin Reid; Community Director for March of Dimes, who was unable to attend tonight's meeting. Mr. Nichols was one of the co-chairs for the March of Dimes last year for Union County. He states the following March of Dimes facts: the March of Dimes is one of the most recognizable national health charities; saving SC's babies and giving every baby a healthy start; 93 cents of every dollar raised in SC funds the mission; 1 in 7 babies are born premature in SC and premature birth is the leading cause of infant death. The "March for Babies" event will be held Saturday, October 26, 2013. Union County residents and businesses raised over \$34,000 last year. The goal for 2013 is \$35,000. Mr. Nichols introduced Kelly Shropshire who is a member of the Ambassador Family for the March of Dimes this year. The recommendation is

to fund the Partnership Commitment Level of \$1,000 from the Community Services – Special Events Account.

**MOTION** by Mayor Pro Tem Garner to fund the March of Dimes in the amount of \$1,000.

**SECOND** by Councilmember Wilson.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

G. DISCUSSION/MOTION – WBCU –UCHS “HALL OF FAME SPONSORSHIP” - UCHS

Mayor Thompson states that Union County High School’s annual Sports Hall of Fame is the induction of Union’s best athletes from the past into the UCHS Sports Hall of Fame. Cinch Sacks will be given to the UCHS Booster Club to sell for a fund raiser. Sponsors who participate in this promotion and the inductees will be printed on the Sack. The recommendation is not to sponsor this year’s UCHS Hall of Fame due to other school events that the City wants to participate in.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Harris to accept recommendation.

**SECOND** by Councilmember Giles.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

H. DISCUSSION/MOTION – UNION COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD - FUNDING

Andrea Powell-Baker, Director of the UCDB addressed City Council. She states that the UCDB is funded annually by the County of Union in the amount of two millages. Currently, one millage is worth approximately \$60,500. Operating budget for the UCDB is just over \$120,000 annually; maintain one full time employee and one 30-hour per week employee. The UCDB is requesting financial support from the City of Union in the amount of \$20,000 for the 2013-2014 budget year. The benefit will be a more focused approach to overall economic development in Union County which in turn will support the business development initiatives of the City of Union. Utility Director Joe Nichols who is also the Chairman of the UCDB addressed council. He commended the UCDB Director on her efforts in recruiting new industries. The recommendation is to fund the Union County Development Board in the amount of \$10,000 for the 2013-2014 budget year.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Wilson to accept recommendation to fund the UCDB in the amount of \$10,000 from PMPA funding.

**SECOND** by Councilmember Harris.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

I. DISCUSSION/MOTION – UNION COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT – “HEALTHY LIVING PROGRAM”

Mayor Thompson states that he talked to Dr. Woodall a few days ago. They are trying to put together a program that would provide an introduction to healthy food choices for kindergarten students during snack time; lessons to focus on cleaning, preparing, and enjoying fruits and vegetables and offer a partnership to promote local farmers. The recommendation is to participate in encouraging children at an early age to eat healthy and also create a partnership with the schools and local farmers with a donation of \$5,000 to the “Healthy Living Program”, from local Government Contingency Fund.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Harris to table item until additional information is obtained from Dr. Woodall.

**SECOND** by Councilmember Hill.  
**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**6. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- A. Please address the Mayor and Council from the lectern and state your name and address for the record. (Please limit your comment to 3-5 minutes)

Torance Inman, Director of the Chamber of Commerce, addressed Council. He states that the Chamber is working with Larry Stevens of the Small Development Business Center out of Rock Hill, SC. Mr. Stevens is now a member of the Chamber's Board. The Chamber, along with the Small Development Business Center will host 10 workshops on the development of small businesses in hopes of helping Union businesses.

Victor Taus, 111 College St., addressed Council regarding a customer's utility bill. He states that the customer has been in the hospital for a month and her utility bill double while she was in the hospital. Mr. Taus feels that the City needs to re-think their expenditures and take some of the additional revenue and give it back to the people. He also states that the City needs to focus on helping businesses stay open in Union instead of focusing on bringing businesses to Union.

Mayor Thompson asked Mr. Taus to come to his office tomorrow morning to get customer's name. Mr. Taus states that he could not because the customer would not want her name made public.

Freddie Bates, 108 Ravencroft Street, addressed Council regarding problems on Ravencroft Street on vacant lots (104 & 106). He states that there is a pile of debris very high on properties. He feels that the City has certain areas that are overlooked. Mr. Bates states that Council should look out for their constituents who vote to put them in office. He feels that the City is being wasteful with its spending.

Mayor Thompson states that the City did some cleaning last year on Ravencroft Street but was not able to go back because of the special piece of equipment needed for that area. The equipment is in the shop and waiting on a part to be repaired. He also states that the City bore the expense of the demolition of a house on Ravencroft Street last year.

Barbara Rippy, 126 Heritage Way, addressed Council. She states that Union has always been good about helping people. Ms. Rippy addressed Victor Taus. She states that she belongs to Grace Methodist Church and they help people pay utility bills, have clothes closet and they would be glad to help the customer with her utility bill. She thanked Mayor and Council for funding Uniquely Union in the amount of \$30,000. Also she thanked Bob Love and Gregg Parker for their hard work on the proposed Union Events Center. The Rippy's have supported the Dixie Youth teams for 43 years. She gave a list of assets Union has to offer over other communities its size. They as follows: USC-Union; Nursing Home; Timken Field and Miracle League Field; Wallace Thomson Hospital; Union Services; the Museum; the Arts Program and Boogaloo Production. Ms. Rippy thanked Timken for supporting the Union Events Center by donating \$250,000 for the lights and the sound system. Ms. Rippy whole-heartily support Union Events Center and Union County.

**7. ANNOUNCEMENT BY MAYOR & COUNCIL**

Mayor Thompson thanked the general public for coming out to the meeting;

thanked them their input and for being fair and honest. He also thanked City Council for their input. Mayor Thompson encouraged citizens to talk with the Council representative in their district to express their needs and it will be handled accordingly.

8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** - TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL AND CONTRACTUAL MATTERS

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

**SECOND** by Councilmember Harris.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

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

**SECOND** by Mayor Pro Tem Garner of executive session into regular session.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

9. **DISCUSSION/MOTION** – CITY ATTORNEY POSITION

Mayor Thompson states that he received a letter of resignation from City Attorney William Whitney on August 19, 2013. The Mayor's recommendation is to accept Mr. Whitney's resignation.

**MOTION** by Mayor Pro Tem Garner to accept resignation from former City Attorney William Whitney.

**SECOND** by Councilmember Giles.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Councilmember Wilson to adjourn.

**SECOND** by Councilmember Giles.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council meeting adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

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Gloria J. Rogers, CMC  
Municipal Clerk

Minutes approved \_\_\_\_\_ 2013

