

**CITY OF UNION, SOUTH CAROLINA
BUDGET WORK SESSION
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 2007
2:00 PM**

{Summary minutes of City Council meeting. Audio tapes of the meeting are file and are included by reference as part of this meeting. An agenda of this meeting has either been mailed or made available to persons, organizations and local news media as per compliance with the South Carolina Code of Laws of 1976, Section 30-4-80(e)}

A budget work session was held on Wednesday, April 11, 2007 at 2:00 p.m. in the City Municipal building with the following present.

CITY COUNCIL: Mayor Bruce Morgan, Councilmembers Tommie Hill, Keith Henderson, Harold Thompson, Ricky Harris, Orangelow Ruff and Fran Bailey.

DEPARTMENT HEADS: Gloria Rogers-Personnel Director/Clerk; Walker Gallman-Finance Director; Jeff Lawson-Building Official; Mike Petrie-Maintenance Shop Director; Sam White-Public Safety Director and Joe Nichols-Utilities Director.

CITY ATTORNEY: Billy Whitney

NEWS MEDIA: Charles Warner – Union Times

OTHERS: Captain Gregg Pickens, Captain Freddie Gault, Ralph Lawson, George Bruce, Betsy Trakas and Pat McMillian

A. CALL TO ORDER

1. Mayor Morgan called the meeting to order. The invocation was given by Councilmember Thompson.

B. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Public Service Director Perry Harmon gave an overview of the Public Service Department. This department handles streets, solid waste and parks for the City of Union. Presently his department has one employee out on worker's comp leave and a vacancy for a Heavy Equipment Operator. Mr. Harmon briefly discussed the street sweeper and the Bobcat 5600 (purchased in the FY2006-2007 budget). He discussed Foster Park and states that events need to be better scheduled at the Park. The City will work with the County Recreation on this matter and hopefully in the very near future is able to broadcast events on the proposed City's (PEG) access channel. The Solid Waste Department was discussed. The Public Service Department's budget is lower than their FY2006-2007 budget. Citywide clean up was discussed. There will be a cleanup campaign beginning next week. The Horseshoe Circle (Sims Drive) area was discussed. There are parking problems with tenants parking on both sides of the streets making it difficult for school buses to come through the street. City Council is proposing to make the circle a one-way street. This item will be presented to City Council for implementation at the April 17, 2007 regular council meeting.
2. Building and Zoning Official Jeff Lawson discussed the Building & Zoning Department. This department consists of four employees: the Building Official, Property Maintenance Inspector, Zoning Coordinator and a Business License Clerk. Mr. Lawson discussed building code enforcement. This department enforces the provisions of the following codes adopted by the South Carolina Building Codes. He discussed a comparison chart of the

building, electrical, mechanical and plumbing permits valuation data for years 2004, 2005 and 2006. He discussed public nuisance enforcement and zoning & planning issues. Mr. Lawson discussed the City of Union Zoning Map & Districts. He discussed amending the zoning ordinance dealing with temporary and mobile signs. This will be presented to City Council at the April 17, 2007 regular council meeting. The Building Official discussed compensating the Zoning Board of Appeals at the same level as the Planning Commission Board. He presented the names of the members of both Boards. Grant Management was discussed. The Building & Zoning Department administers each of the following types of grant programs along with seeking other available grant opportunities: CDBG and Opportunity Grant (SC Department of Commerce). Mr. Lawson discussed Gateway sign design & layout with before and after examples. A mural of historic significance will be painted by the acclaimed Artist, "Blue Sky", on the rear wall of the building housing "Keepsake Jewelers" and formerly "The Jeter Agency". The Union Mill site CDBG grant was discussed. Business License was discussed. Currently, the City of Union has over 1200 active business licenses. Revenue from business licenses averages between \$350,000-\$400,000 annually. The department is requesting funding to integrate the zoning map with the existing utility GIS system and add useful property data for accuracy to aid in economic development projects. This department is requesting funding to purchase a new ½ ton flex-fuel crew-cab 4 x 4 truck.

3. Utility Director Joe Nichols gave an overview of the Utilities Department. Mr. Nichols presented an organization chart of his department. He is requesting a position be added to the Gas Department and changing a position in the electric department to a lineman trainee or a journeyman. He discussed the electric system. The City has 7,100 customers on the electric distribution system. He also discussed the water system. There are 6,300 customers on the water distribution system. Mr. Nichols discussed the City SCADA system and the wastewater system. There are 5,100 customers on the wastewater system. The gas distribution system continues to be the City of Union's leader for expansion of service and additional revenue. There are 6,600 customers on the natural gas distribution system. Mr. Nichols reviewed the natural gas terms & conversions. The gas service policy was reviewed. He presented the proposed and projected budget for the electric, water, wastewater and gas divisions. Capital Improvements for the electric distribution system were discussed. The Electric Division is requesting a line truck at an estimated cost of \$175,000. The proposed capital improvements for electric totals \$810,000. The water division is requesting a pickup truck at an estimated cost of \$20,000. The proposed capital improvements total \$783,500 in the water department. Mr. Nichols discussed the capital improvements for the wastewater division. This division is requesting TV Inspection equipment. The total capital improvements for wastewater for improvements and equipment totals \$1,047,900. Mr. Nichols discussed the natural gas system expansion along SC Hwy. 9 from Bentley Town Road to Phillippi Church Road and along Phillippi Church Road from SC Hwy. 9 to SC Hwy. 49. The estimated cost is \$172,000. A pickup truck and a commercial truck are being requested for the gas division. Mr. Nichols concluded his overview with the Capital improvements forecast summary for 2007-2012. The total capital improvement summary is \$4,064,400.
4. Vehicle Maintenance Director Mike Petrie gave an overview of the City Shop. He presented a vehicle/equipment list to City Council. The department has four employees. This department maintains approximately 205 pieces of rolling stock and all other equipment. This includes the equipment from the Buffalo Water District and also the nine vehicles his department maintains for the Housing Authority. Mr. Petrie gave an update on alternative fuel. He presented information on GovDeals, an online auction program for the City of Union. The on-line bidding process is working well for the City. He discussed motor sports. Mr. Petrie is president of the Motor Sports

Association. The Association has recruited Team Aruba (drag racing) to Union. The annual Big Buck Racing and GNCC racing will be held this weekend in Cross-Keys.

5. Boogaloo Production member Betsy Trakas made a presentation to City Council. Ms. Trakas states that Boogaloo has been named South Carolina original folk life theatre. Boogaloo was created six years ago. Boogaloo Production presents two plays a year. Approximately 100 citizens of Union participate as cast in the plays. Boogaloo's mission is to preserve oral histories of Union County, to provide a creative outlet for the county's artists and to offer quality entertainment to audience. They envision a Union Arts Center/Theater for additional plays, concerts and recitals, festivals, business training sessions and multi media presentations. Other uses will be office space, reception hall, conference room, classrooms and gallery space. Union Arts Center will create a "ripple effect". Boogaloo will cast a play called "In Good Company" the first two weekends of June. The Mayor discussed funding for the Boogaloo project. He recommends that they seek funding from the Timken Foundation. Other fund raising projects were discussed. Boogaloo member George Bruce requests support from the City and County. The Mayor made a recommendation to the Boogaloo group to put together a proposal to be presented to the City and County Council. He also recommends that they put together a budget for the proposed Arts Center/Theater building and a list of funding sources.
6. Public Safety Director Sam White gave an overview of the Public Safety Department. He presented the Department's organizational chart. He discussed an additional SRO at the High School with the consolidation of schools. The SRO program has been a success in the schools. He discussed a Gun Safety Program (Eddie Eagle GunSafe Program) to teach children in grades K-3 steps to take if they find a gun. This is a program Chief White would like to implement. No funding is needed for the program. Chief White discussed purchasing inside cameras for Patrol Cars. He also discussed purchasing two deflating devices for police pursuit. Council recommends purchasing four deflating devices. There was an in-depth question and answer period regarding the public safety department staff and the hiring process for PSO's. The City's benefit package was also discussed.

Finance Director Walker Gallman discussed funding for outside agencies. Council will fund them at the following levels:

- Museum	\$14,000
- Chamber of Commerce	\$49,600
- OldeEnglish District	\$ 2,340
- YMCA	\$75,000
- Union County Recreation Department	\$10,000
- Boogaloo Broadcasting Company	\$ 5,000
- Union Memory Walk	\$ 250
- Uniquely Union Festival	\$ 2,000
- Union American Red Cross	\$ 2,500
- Union High Band-Aid Club	\$ 350
- Youth Leadership	\$ 2,000
- Veteran's Day Parade	\$ 1,000
- Union County Branch NAACP	\$ 2,000
- We Care, Inc.	\$ 500
- Union County Crime Stoppers	\$ 1,000
- Union County Arts Council	\$ 2,000
- Federation of the Blind	\$ 500
- The American Legion	\$ 1,000
- Mental Health of America	\$ 250

The capital-vehicles and equipment requests for the Public Safety Department and the Building and Zoning Department were reviewed and discussed by Council. It was the consensus of Council to fund the requests.

The following request were reviewed and discussed by City Council:

Meter reading (mobile field collector) in the Finance Department	request approved
Wireless application	request approved
Line Truck	request approved
Pickup Truck in Water Dept.	request approved
Wastewater TV Equipment	request approved
Natural Gas – Pickup Truck	request approved
Commercial Vehicle	request approved

The Capital Improvements Summary for FY2008 was reviewed by Council. This is a five-year plan.

Proposed rate increases were reviewed. Mayor Morgan recommends implementing the proposed 10% increase on volume on water and wastewater. He does not recommend a gas increase. Council is in agreement with recommendation.

There is a 3% proposed cost of living increase in the budget. This was approved by Council.

Finance Director Walker Gallman requested an imaging document system in his department at a cost of \$20,000. Council approved request.

Utility Director Joe Nichols is asking for one utility worker in the gas department. This was approved by Council.

City Council asked Staff to look at other insurance companies and possibly get bids to obtain a better rate for the City as well as the employees.

The compensation for the Zoning Board of Appeals was reviewed. Council approved this request.

The Zoning Map upgrade for the Building Department through GIS was presented for approval. Council approved this request.

Mayor Morgan recommends a utility rate study be performed.

City Hall renovation was discussed. The Mayor recommends remodeling the restrooms. They are in great need of renovation. Council approved the recommendation. The Mayor will bring back bids to Council for approval.

Mayor Morgan reviewed the special project list that he presented to Council at Monday night's budget work session.

The approved request and recommendations will be incorporated into a proposed budget and presented to City Council at their May 15, 2007 regular council meeting.

C. **ADJOURNMENT**

The Budget Work Session adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Gloria J. Rogers, Municipal Clerk

Minutes Approved _____ 2007