

**MINUTES
COUNCIL WORKSHOP
MONDAY, AUGUST 9, 2017
6:00 P.M.**

{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 April 9, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Municipal building with the following present:

COUNCIL: Mayor Harold Thompson, Mayor Pro Tem Robert Garner, Councilmembers Tommy Anthony, Vicki C. Morgan, Ricky Todd Harris, Pamela Sloss (arrived at 6:09) and Sonja Craig.

DEPARTMENTAL STAFF: Debbie Woodard – Acting Municipal Clerk; Walker Gallman – Finance Director; Joe Nichols – Utility Director; Adam Harris – Assistant Utility Director; Gregg Pickens – Captain and Laura Hembree – Accounting Supervisor.

CITY ATTORNEY: Larry Flynn

NEWS MEDIA: Graham Williams

OTHERS: Curtiss Hunter, Scott Sandor and John Gregory.

A. Call To Order

Mayor Thompson called the meeting to order. He gave the invocation. The Pledge of Alliance was given by all present. The roll was called by Acting Municipal Clerk Debbie Woodard.

B. Business

1. Discussion – YMCA Issues

Scott Sandor, Director of YMCA addressed council about some issues related to the partnership between the City of Union and the YMCA. He presented a powerpoint presentation demonstrating the following issues:

- a. Financial Assistance – demonstrates how much assistance the “Y” provides in the community each year; between 2010 and 2016 this number has steadily increased to \$65,000, the bulk of it is reduced fees for membership.
- b. Membership Trends – continuing to grow membership over the last 6 or 7 years.
- c. Membership Revenue – over the six year period, it increased membership revenue by about \$50,000 annually.

Mr. Sandor states that the financial partnership with the City has decreased from the City’s contribution level from \$100,000 annually down to \$67,000. The last slide demonstrates from 2010 – 2016 what the “Y” pays in utilities. They have basically seen roughly a \$13,000 annual increase in the amount that is paid in utilities cost. Membership is up as well as financial assistance which means that typically they are bringing in the ones that would not be able to afford it. They are getting reduced fees plus able to participate and have

access to everything that is offered. Even though the revenue is up \$50,000, between the \$33,000 less from the City's funding side and the increased utilities cost brings the YMCA back to zero. Mr. Sandor states that they work hard with their Board of Directors and staff to be good stewards of all the monies that comes in for membership dues, grant monies, the monies that comes through partnership and through the City of Union. The YMCA's question is as a Board is when they received notification that they would be receiving less funding through the City, they wanted to have conversation about that and the partnership to see where the City feel things are heading. If there is an issue where there are just not enough resources then that help them figure out where to go next as an organization. If it is a situation where the City doesn't feel like it is a strong partnership for the City of Union and that's why the resources and the funding are being decreased, they would like to have a conversation about what that looks like. Mr. Sandor states that they have made some short term changes the way they operate through staff reduction that will help over the next few months to get caught back up which is a short term solution.

Mayor Thompson states that he is concerned about a rumor that the YMCA is shutting down and he is very distributed when a board member verbally attack one of our council members about the budget cut for the YMCA. The board member needs to address City Council at their meeting.

Councilmember Morgan asked Mr. Sandor how much funding does the County provide to the YMCA. He states that the County does not provide any funding. Councilmember Morgan states that since the city taxpayers fund the "YMCA", what do the city taxpayers get or do they get a discount. Mr. Sandor states that the City taxpayers do not get any benefits. The City of Union is a corporate sponsor with employees getting a reduced rate.

Mr. Sandor states that they may need to collectively look at a partnership for the community.

Councilmember Craig states that the YMCA needs to not only advertise on Facebook but other places such as the newspaper and their signage in front of building so that everyone knows what's going on at the "Y" and when you get new equipment.

Councilmember Anthony and Mayor Pro Garner both states that the City cut almost everybody's budget this year. Mayor Pro Tem Garner also states that City of Union departments were also asked to cut their budget.

Mayor Pro Tem Garner states that at the next council budget work session, they need to decide whether council will do anything for the citizens in the city regarding the "Y".

2. DISCUSSION – ROCKY CREEK WATER DISTRICT – CONTRACT

Mayor Thompson states that Utility Director Joe Nichols met with Rocky Creek Water District last Thursday and they went over their new contract. Rocky Creek has some issues regarding the City looking at a 10 year contract agreement. Mayor Thompson asked Utility Director Joe Nichols to address these issues. Mr. Nichols read a letter of rejection from Rocky Creek Water Company in response to the proposed third (3rd) agreement for sale of water to Rocky Creek Water Company. It states that this objection is based on the fact that the City of Union, in its three (3) proposed contracts, have changed the water rates on three different occasions and still insist on placing in the agreement, the restrictions regarding Rocky Creek being allowed to purchase water from a different source which was originally requested but was omitted on the first agreement presented to Rocky Creek. They further reject to the charge of \$125 per meter per month as stated in the proposed agreement

which is based on the fact the City of Union uses Rocky Creek's water line to furnish water to the Cedar Hill Plant and this should also be considered in any agreement presented to Rocky Creek Water Company. They further request that the City of Union add to the agreement that the bill from the City of Union to Rocky Creek Water Company be itemized each month regarding usage of meter and the amount of water used by the Cedar Hill Plant. They further request that there be confirmation of the fact that there is a direct water line from the water tank located on the Sonoco Road to the Sonoco Plant. The Utility Director states that the City went back and gathered a lot of history when everything was built and when it was developed and when Wambell came on line. Sonoco Plant was built in 1969. Rocky Creek was not in business until March of 1970. The water line was put in and Sonoco Plant was served; Sonoco Tank was built before Rocky Creek was even there. There was an issue about who paid for the line for Wambell; it was discovered that the City of Union paid for the water line for Wambell. Mr. Nichols states that the City presented an itemized bill to Rocky Creek. The way the contract reads is there is a 10 year agreement with Rocky Creek and they can't get out of the agreement until after the 10 years. They states that they do not want to be tied to just purchasing water from the City of Union. If they do decide to go with someone else, there is a clause that they give the City a 60 day notice. Rocky Creek Water District wants a year to year contract. Utility Director Joe Nichols recommends the year to year contract. The new contract will be presented at the next regular council meeting.

3. DISCUSSION – ZONING AMENDMENTS

Mayor Thompson states that this week he met with the University and David Langley. A contactor is coming in and they are looking at doing some things in town. The Mayor states that the City will need to look at its zoning ordinance such as making amendments if the city plans on growing. The City needs to start looking at its zoning ordinance. There are some things that need to be added in the A1- Zoning District. The Mayor will bring a recommended list to council for their approval. The City will go through the proper procedures during this process. The Mayor also states that the Board of Appeals is not working toward what the City is working toward to make the City grow. The Mayor states that the Council needs to get in and do what they need to do. Councilmember Morgan states that the City does need to look at making amendments to the zoning ordinance.

4. DISCUSSION – LANDMARK ASSOCIATES/USDA

Finance Director Walker Gallman states that he went back to 1992 to look at the history of Landmark Association. Some of the projects started in 1989. In 1991 the building was sold to Landmark Associates and they took this building and got a USDA loan at more than 1,770,250. They took out a 50 year loan at 6.5% percent, and then the City went in and let them borrow \$65,000 to clean up the commercial building on the front. As of June 30, 2017 they owe \$17,293. The City also loaned them \$50,868. It's a balloon payment of \$50,000 at 0% due 2045. It is actually a mortgage recorded at the court house stating that if City Council does so desire can forgive this loan. Councilmember Vickie Morgan states that she is in favor of selling the hotel in an effort to relocate the hotels resident to the new Kennan Oaks apartment on the Union Mill site. The Mayor states that he would schedule a meeting to discuss the matter. But first USDA must be contacted about housing.

5. UPDATE – NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Greg Medford, Property Maintenance Inspector gave an update from the list from the Neighbor Improvement Program, the Community Development

Block Grant and the City of Union as what is completed and what is still in progress.

Mayor Pro Tem Garner asked about the status of the old McBeth School. The Mayor states that he talked to Kimberly Herndon and there is housing money coming down Brownsfield.

Greg Medford will be leaving the City of Union to pursue another career opportunity. He thanked council for the opportunity to work with the City of Union.

6. DISUSSION – FORM OF GOVERNMENT CHANGE

Councilmember Craig states that they have been talking about the Mayor's position going back to part time and having a City Manager. Councilmember Morgan states that there will have to be a change in the form of government. Council discussed a referendum to change the form of government. City Attorney Larry Flynn states that there will have to be an ordinance, then put on the ballot; there is probably not enough time to make it this year but just roll it over and have it during the November 2018 election or a Special Election.

7. DISCUSSION – PLANNING, BUILDING APPEALS & ZONING APPEALS BOARD TERM LIMITS

Mayor and City Council discussed the Planning Board, Building Appeals & Zoning Board and the Appeals Board Term Limits. The Mayor states that the boards need to be revamped. Some members have been on the boards many years. Council discussed establishing staggered terms and expanding the 5-member board to a 7-member board so the Mayor and City Council could each appoint a member.

8. DISCUSSION – BOARD COMPENSATION

City Council discussed changing the way board members are compensated. Mayor Thompson recommends board members be paid by the meeting rather than the set amount twice a year.

9. DISCUSSION – SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, ETC.)

Mayor and City Council discussed social media and Facebook. The Mayor will have someone to come in to present this information to City Council.

10. NEGOTIATE WITH COUNTY (BUILDING INSPECTOR & CODE ENFORCEMENT)

Mayor Thompson states that his suggestion would be to partner with the County, they have a building inspector and code enforcement. Council discussed in-depth the pros and cons of combining positions. Mayor Thompson will get with County Supervisor Frank Hart on these issues.

D. **ADJOURNMENT:**

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

Council workshop adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Gloria J. Rogers, Municipal Clerk

Minutes approved _____ 2017.