

February Minutes
Mayor and Council Work Session
Commerce City Hall Conference Room
February 6, 2006
6:00 P.M.

The regularly scheduled work session of the Mayor and Council was held on Monday, February 6, 2006 at 6:00 P.M. in the City Hall Conference Room. The work session was called to order by Mayor Charles Hardy. City Clerk Shirley Willis called the roll and those in attendance were Mayor Charles Hardy, Mayor Pro Tem Dusty Slater, Council members Wayne Gholston, Donald Wilson, Mark Fitzpatrick, Bob Sosebee and Richard Massey, City Manager Clarence Bryant, one member of the press and one citizen.

Mayor Charles Hardy said he had nothing to talk about at that time and turned the work session over to City Manager Clarence Bryant to go over the agenda.

City Manager Clarence Bryant said there were seven or eight items and the first one was the Library Expansion Pre-Application and he asked Susan Harper, Librarian, to present the information.

Susan said the application was in reference to the library expansion and the deadline to have it in was in February. She said that the expansion was not unexpected because notification in 1995 reflected that the library would be outgrown. The population increase and the patron increase had confirmed that expectation. A building fund had been started and the City of Commerce was in a good situation. The State would fund 75% of renovation and expansion. Susan said she was in attendance to ask support from the council that the City of Commerce wanted to be on the list for funding and also, that they would fund the remaining 25%. The approval would need to be done at the council meeting and she would take the application to Atlanta by 2/15/06 to meet the deadline.

City Manager Clarence Bryant said proposals of 5,000 square feet expansion had been looked at. The cost of that much expansion would cost approximately \$2 million dollars and the City of Commerce's share of that would be \$575,000. There had been no architectural work done yet for the exact square footage of expansion. It would be two to three years in the future before the expansion would be done.

Authorization was requested for the Mayor to sign the pre-application and also to send to the State Senator and Representative for their support.

Councilman Donald Wilson asked if the money would be in the budget. City Manager Clarence Bryant said somewhere down the road the amount would be put in the budget because at the present time the exact amount of square footage was an unknown and an amount could not be calculated.

The City of Commerce would have to raise the remainder of the funding by conducting fund raisers. Councilman Donald Wilson asked if the amount paid for the properties would go toward the city's share. The answer was no because the city would have to already own the property before any funding could be received.

Mayor Charles Hardy said the Friends of the Library would host fund raisers. City Manager Clarence Bryant said there would be no money in the next budget cycle. Susan Harper said that it would be dollars budgeted for in the 2009 budget. Mr. Bryant said the City of Commerce was where it needed to be at this time to meet the deadlines.

City Manager Clarence Bryant then covered the agenda items.

Commerce Fire Department "Knox Box Rapid Entry System"

City Manager Clarence Bryant said the system would allow firemen to access the buildings when there was a fire and not have to wait for someone to let them in. He said it was not mandated but the opportunity was there. The merchants would be receiving correspondence to have the option to participate or not. The City of Commerce would be a participant for all buildings owned by the City.

Councilman Richard Massey said he favored it because he knew from experience when working at the hospital. The fire department had to break doors to get into the hospital during a fire call. Mayor Charles Hardy said the key would remain safe in Fire Truck I at all times.

Memorandum of Understanding with the Jackson County Water and Sewer Authority

City Manager Clarence Bryant said there was an understanding with the Water Authority regarding the service territory at I-85 and Bana Road to Wheeler Cemetery Road. He covered the information and told the group they had probably read it in the paper. He further said that some agreement would be binding and Agreements had been prepared for the Mayor to sign.

Some of the items in the agreement were that the Water Authority would transfer to Commerce the territory bounded on the south by Interstate 85, on the west by the North Oconee River and Georgia Highway 82 Spur, on the north by Maysville's service territory and on the east by the existing water and sewer service area. Commerce, in return, would purchase the 16-inch water main along Wheeler Cemetery Road and would serve approximately 35 authority customers in that area. Further the City of Commerce would allow the Water Authority to use up to 50,000 gallons per day sewer treatment capacity within the shared tax area.

Recreation Department – "Code of Conduct"

City Manager Clarence Bryant said that based upon some instances that occurred last year and also some on TV, Lonnie Dickerson had put together a Code of Conduct for

penalties. The Code was the basic minimum of regulations and consequences. Mr. Dickerson was seeking endorsement from the Mayor and Council.

Worker's Compensation Insurance Payment Plan

City Manager Clarence Bryant covered the claims experience for the past five years and gave the premium amounts for last year and the increase projected for renewal. GMA gave options on the renewal for 2006-2007 that had not been offered in the past. With a higher deductible the renewal premium would be reduced on a scale based upon the option honored. After communication with GMA personnel and looking at the claims experience the decision was made to honor a \$50,000 deductible for renewal. The premium would be \$33,313. It was further decided that \$46,687 would be placed in a self-insurance reserve account and that balance would be built up to \$100,000 within the next two years.

Mr. Bryant said that based on the five years claims experience there would have been only three years that the City would have gone over the \$50,000 and could have actually saved money. According to Mr. Bryant the City chose the \$50,000; however any time an option of this nature was taken it was a gamble.

MGAG Regulatory Compliance Service Agreement, First Amendment

City Manager Clarence Bryant said that the regulations in the gas industry were out of sight. The City of Commerce signed up a few months ago to participate in the regulations, however there was some delay on behalf of MGAG and the compliance would start in March, 2006 versus beginning in November, 2005.

Demolition Bids for Unsafe Dwellings

City Manager Clarence Bryant covered the information regarding the bids received for the demolition of the condemned properties on Cross Street, Cedar Drive and MLK, Jr., Drive. The low bidder on Cross Street (\$4,000) and Cedar Drive (\$3500) was Rucker Landscaping and there was a tie bid on the MLK, Jr. Drive property in the amount of \$2,000.

Mr. Bryant said he would recommend if the same low bidder was tied with another bidder that the property be given to the other bidder so they could get them off the ground quicker.

Councilman Richard Massey asked about the building with the leaning wall. Mr. Bryant told him it was in the works.

Councilman Wayne Gholston said a lady had inquired about purchasing the property on MLK, Jr. Drive. Mr. Bryant said the land would not be bothered but the structure on the property would be demolished because it was inhabitable.

Jackson County Senior Center Request for Funds

The annual request for the \$1,500 contribution to the Senior Center had been received. The contribution helped to offset expenses for the transportation of the City of Commerce residents to and from the Center.

Activity Reports – would be included in the agenda package.

Financial Review - would be included in the agenda package.

City Manger Clarence Bryant updated the council on the electrical phase rebuild. He said the poles would be erected very soon and the upgrade would begin.

City Manger Clarence Bryant said that Jim Eubanks, Gas Superintendent had shown him a list of the gas main easements. There were four that were still required. Mr. Bryant said he had a meeting on Wednesday with Dr. Bouchard regarding his property. Also, Mr. Bryant told the council that the industrial park property indebtedness had been paid and the City of Commerce had been refunded the earnest money that was paid up front.

Mr. Bryant brought to the attention of the council that a new drop box for payments had been installed at the front of City Hall.

Councilman Bob Sosebee asked if the street sweeper was working. He said the main streets need to be swept on both side because they were filthy due to the railroad work. Mr. Bryant said the gravel would have to be removed prior to sweeping and the railroad was trying to clean the tracks.

Councilman Mark Fitzpatrick asked if the railroad noticed the falling wall on North Broad Street. Mr. Bryant said yes they did. DOT had come in during the crossing upgrades and closed down the whole town. Another crew would work the wall according to Mr. Bryant and the time was unknown when that would be done. A consensus of the council was the crossings work was the best job that had been done.

Councilman Mark Fitzpatrick asked about the parking lot wall. Mr. Bryant said it was in the curing stage and would be finished as soon as curing was completed.

Councilman Donald Wilson asked if anything had been done with the engineering firm on the “mistake” on the gas lines. Mr. Bryant responded that a meeting was scheduled on Tuesday and any information would be forwarded to John Stell, City Attorney.

Councilman Richard Massey asked about the Annexation Bill as per the GMA update. Councilman Bob Sosebee asked Mr. Bryant to write a letter for the mayor and council to sign and send to the Senators and Representatives regarding that bill. He said he would personally call John Meadows and others. Hopefully, the bill would not go out of the Committee.

All councilmen agreed that the City of Commerce needed to participate and do our part to oppose the bill.

Councilman Richard Massey made a motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Dusty Slater to adjourn the meeting.

The vote was unanimous.

Charles L. Hardy, Jr., Mayor

Shirley Willis, City Clerk