

May Minutes
Mayor and Council Work Session
Commerce City Hall Conference Room
May 7, 2007
6:00 P.M.

The regularly scheduled work session of the Mayor and Council was held on Monday, May 7, 2007 at 6:00 P.M. in the City Hall Conference Room. Mayor Charles Hardy called the work session to order and City Clerk Shirley Willis called the roll. Those in attendance were Mayor Charles Hardy, Mayor Pro Tem Dusty Slater, Council members Wayne Gholston, Donald Wilson, Mark Fitzpatrick and Bob Sosebee, City Manager Clarence Bryant, one member of the press and three city employees.

Mayor Charles Hardy said that the Jackson County Governmental Roundtable would be held in the Braselton Community Room of the Police & Municipal Court Building on June 7, 2007. The reception would begin at 6:00 P.M. and dinner would be served at 7:00 P.M. According to Mayor Charles Hardy there would be two presentations made on Economic Development.

The next item of Mayor Charles Hardy was that at the Mayor's meeting Mayor Jim Joiner was absent and he was in the hospital with chest pains. The mayors discussed the retirement package of Crandall Jones.

City Manager Clarence Bryant reminded everyone of the 5th District Meeting at Braselton on Wednesday, May 9 from 12:00 Noon until 2:00 P.M. Anyone wishing to go could ride with him but would have to return with Steve McKown because Mr. Bryant would be on his way to the MGAG meeting in Callaway Gardens.

Also, the Rooker barbeque was scheduled on Tuesday, May 8, 2007 at Noon at Piedmont Park in Atlanta. Anyone wishing to go could meet behind City Hall at 10:30 A.M. and they should be returning around 2:00 – 2:30 P.M.

Mayor Charles Hardy then turned the work session over to City Manager Clarence Bryant to cover the agenda items.

1. MEAG Voting Delegate Resolution naming Clarence Bryant as the Voting Delegate.

City Manager Clarence Bryant said at the last meeting a resolution was approved naming Mark Fitzpatrick as alternate voting delegate for the Gas Authority. He had received paperwork that showed Mark Fitzpatrick as voting delegate and Richard Massey as alternate delegate. The resolution needed to be readopted showing Mr. Bryant as voting delegate and Mark Fitzpatrick as alternate voting delegate.

2. Building Code Amendments:

A. Vinyl Siding

City Manager Clarence Bryant reported that research had been done and no fire retardant OSB was available. There was fire retardant plywood but it was very expensive and most contractors were using the OSB and an extra layer.

Councilman Bob Sosebee said his opinion was that the City should look at the grade of vinyl siding allowed. He thought the higher grade would not melt as fast. Planner David Zellner was getting the information from McDonald Hardware on Tuesday regarding the vinyl.

Mayor Charles Hardy said that maybe there should be protection behind the vinyl.

B. Smoke Detectors

City Manager, Clarence Bryant said that the Code under new construction required a detector in each bedroom. That would require an amendment to the safety code. If agreed by the council, an ordinance to amend the code could be drawn up by Attorney John Stell and be ready for adoption at the Council meeting.

According to City Manager Clarence Bryant a continuation of the research would be done on the vinyl before amending the code.

3. Jackson County Certified Literate Community Program Request for Funds.

Mr. Bryant had received the letter requesting the contribution of \$2,385.00 for the Jackson County Literate Program. The amount requested was based upon the population count.

4. GMEBS Annual Meeting Proxy

City Manager Clarence Bryant asked if anyone wished to go to the annual meeting of GMEBS and vote or if they desired that a proxy vote be sent. The consensus was that a proxy vote would be sufficient.

5. Locust Street Widening

City Manager Clarence Bryant reported that the street was too narrow for two cars to travel at the same time. He said Rick Lewis; Public Works Director had looked at the street and done some calculations for widening by adding 3' on each side. The approximate cost to complete the widening would be between \$4,000 and \$5,000.

Ivy Street beside Commerce tire that was only 9' – 9-1/2' of pavement with deep ditches and large trees. A suggestion was that the residents on the street should be canvassed for their input to make the street a one-way street and in which direction the one-way should be. Once the information was gathered it would be brought back to the council.

6. Sprinkler System Permit Amount

City Manager Clarence Bryant said the City of Commerce permit fees were based on a fee for each sprinkler head. A check had been made with the surrounding cities and counties and a variety of fees were used. Mr. Bryant went over the schedules and stated that the City of Commerce did not inspect every head.

Councilman Bob Sosebee said he had no problem with the fee being \$1.00 per head with a cap of \$5,000. Councilman Mark Fitzpatrick said he had no problem with a cap but not to give them away.

7. GMA Annual Convention Voting Delegate

According to Mr. Bryant a proxy vote could also be sent in to GMA. Otherwise someone would be required to attend the business meeting and also the caucus.

8. K-9 Officer Transportation

City Manager, Clarence Bryant said that Police Chief Gaissert had asked him to bring this subject up. Cameron Boswell was the K-9 officer and lived about a mile above I-85. When an accident occurred and a drug dog was needed there was a delay in time because Cameron would have to bring the dog to the Police Department and change vehicles before responding to the call.

The question was if there could be a take home vehicle for K-9 transportation and make it specific to that unit.

9. Mrs. Clinkscales' Building Removal

The deadline had expired for the removal of the building. City Manager, Clarence Bryant had talked to Attorney John Stell and previously the mayor and council had instructed the code enforcement to remove an unsafe structure and lien the property. There were some alternatives that could be taken on the commercial property.

Councilman Donald Wilson said that the building had been sold and the new owners were in the process of removing the building. City Manager Clarence Bryant said the new owners must know that the removal letter was in effect.

10. City Hall Windows Replacement

City Manager Clarence Bryant said some of the windows were rotting out. The City had been working with Don Donaudy on specifications and he had drawn up plans for replacement. Two windows had been brought to City Hall for inspection and the Pella window was the most favored choice.

Councilman Bob Sosebee said that he did not think the City of Commerce could replace windows in the historic district with a product that other business owners would not be allowed to use. He suggested that a bid be obtained for wood windows and bring it back to the council.

11. Quitclaim Deed – Commerce Veterans Home, Inc.

City Manager Clarence Bryant had received the quitclaim deed from the Veterans Home, Inc. on the property located on Carson Street. It would be recorded after the meeting.

12. 2007-2008 Proposed Budget

City Manager Clarence Bryant asked Steve McKown to go over the preliminary budget.

Steve McKown had passed out copies of the budget as well as “talking points” paperwork. He went over the talking points and explained each one of them. He said the budget was down \$2.23 million from last year making the total budget \$28.28 million. The reason for that was that major capital projects on utility funds had been completed. There was a decrease in the projected natural gas cost and the millage rate static remained at 1.6 mils. Included within the budget was \$500K for a TE Grant.

Under the Payroll budget there was a 3.0% COLA across the board which was comparable to the CPI. Also included was up to a 2% merit increase for the most deserving employees when an evaluation was completed on their anniversary date.

A pay study from UGA had recommendations but they were not included in the 2008 budget. Those were outlined for review.

The statement was made that the General Fund was out of balance by \$453,031 but they were working on it.

Councilman Bob Sosebee asked that a work session be held to only discuss the pay plan. He said that should be segregated from the budget and the decision should be made if it would be implemented in one-half segments over two years or do it all in one year. At the work session the functions of each job would be addressed.

Steve then went over page 58 which showed an overview of the budget and also brought to the attention of the council the pie charts for each fund to explain the distribution of the funds within that entity.

Steve elaborated on the personnel page that presented the position and not the person. He said he had used that format before and it was incorporated into this budget.

City Manager, Clarence Bryant said that in the past a separate meeting had been held with the other departments. However, since the budget had been cut down the council may not wish to do that.

Mr. Bryant then talked about the electrical work downtown and he advised the council that the pole at Peerless Laundry would be left until completion because that was the street lights power source.

Mr. Bryant said that Councilman Donald Wilson brought to the attention of the city that the water tank behind Ivie's ran over and he asked Mark Fitzpatrick if he could check out the instrument problem.

Councilman Donald Wilson talked about Barber Street and the other streets that were getting ready to pave under the LARP program.

Councilman Donald Wilson told Mr. Bryant that Vivian Poe was coming to the council meeting about the S. Broad Street dirt extension not being paved.

There was no further business and the work session was adjourned.

Charles L. Hardy, Jr., Mayor

Shirley Willis, City Clerk