CITY OF DARLINGTON

BUDGET WORK SESSION

WEDNESDAY MAY 20, 2020 AT 6:30 PM (ZOOM MEETING)

The Zoom Meeting was delayed due to Mrs. Rock having to create a Zoom Account for the City of Darlington. The City was using Asset Technology's Zoom Account and it was in use by a church on this night.

Present at the meeting: Mayor Curtis Boyd, Councilpersons Reed, Baccus, Gardner, Milling, Nettles and Segars. Also present on the Zoom session was Lisa Rock, W&S Superintendent Mr. Kinsaul, Police Chief Kelvin Washington, Alex Gainey, Sheila Jones, Lee Andrews.

Mayor Boyd began the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Prayer given by Mr. Segars.

Mr. Howard Garland started with the Building Codes and Enforcement. He explained how he moved Mr. Alex Gainey to the Street Department back in February as Superintendent and hired Mr. David Wilkes, a Master Building Inspector to work on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In the meantime, Shelia Jones, will work under Mr. Wilkes training to be the future Building Inspector for the City of Darlington. Ms. Jones explained to Mayor and Council that the reason the department would be closing the year ending was due to the personnel changes that had been made. Mayor Boyd asked about line item 226-Maintenance and Service contracts. Mr. Garland explained to him that this is for contracts and service that we have with companies that provide our coping and postage needs. Mr. Garland also explained that he competively shops out for these types of things. Mayor Boyd asked about line item 272-Special Contracts. Ms. Jones explained that that was for house demolition and lot cleaning. Mayor Boyd wanted to know why only 9 houses had been taken down out of 42 that had been budgeted for. Ms. Jones said that in addition to the 9 houses, 3 have been taken done by the property owners and 8 houses have been fixed by the property owners. Councilman Howard Nettles wanted to know if Shelia had a list of what criteria is used to determine if a house needs to be taken down. Mr. Alex Gainey explained that they go by Building and Property Codes to determine if a house needs to be taken down. Councilman Nettles asked Ms. Jones if she saw any more activity on that list where the homeowners are trying to fix their home? Ms. Jones said she had three presently that were.

Mr. Garland announced that he had just received a text from the State of South Carolina Infrastructure Authority that the City of Darlington has been approve for $500,000 for the East Broad Street project.

Mr. Alex Gainey with the Street and Sanitation Department started going over the line items for Department 630. He began with 101 salaries, siting there was an increase due to moving his salary

over and a 2% raise for the employees. He goes through each line item. Councilman Nettles wanted to know why line item 385 went from $45,000 to $30,000 and then back to 45,000? Mr. Garland said due to the time of year when funds are low, they try to keep costs down with some larger like items. Sometimes we will use the funds closer to the end of the budget year. Councilman Nettles asked Mr. Gainey if he had 9 full time employees in department, and he said yes. Councilman Milling wanted to know the difference between line items 285-Asphalt Supplies and 388-Paving, C&G, SW. Mr. Garland explained that line item 285 was for city owned streets and line item 388 is to help out SCDOT on some sidewalk projects. Councilman Nettles asked if we are reimbursed from SCDOT? Mr. Garland said we have never been reimbursed by DOT other than the streetscape projects and the sidewalks down South Main street where we gave them 100,000. Councilman Nettles asked had we ever asked for reimbursement and Mr. Garland said that we have. Mayor Boyd told Mr. Garland to add that to his list because they were going to write a letter. Mayor Boyd asked Mr. Gainey about a $50,000 difference in the salaries from his old to department in Codes to his new department in Street and Sanitation. Mr. Gainey asked Mr. Garland to elaborate on that question because he doesn't know what they have in store for Codes Enforcement. Mayor Boyd asked Mr. Gainey if they still have Karen there and he said yes. Mayor Boyd said, "So now we have two department heads, one that was and that is"? Mr. Gainey said, "No, she is not a department head, she is the office clerk". The Mayor said, "But the salaries have stayed the same". Mr. Garland said he would be much more comfortable to discuss personnel in executive session. Mayor Boyd said, "That is fine, but there is a $50,000 question to ask"? Councilman Gardner points out that they must be careful when talking about staff members and that they can't talk about that in the public. Mayor Boyd raises his concern about the $50,000 discrepancy and why there are still two people there. Councilwoman Elaine Reed points out that Mayor Boyd is calling names. Mayor Boyd said he will specify on live TV. Mayor Boyd said, "I told everybody when I became Mayor, I will call names". Mr. Gainey moved on to Department 640-Sanitation explaining that the mechanics salary from 660 will be moved to 640 to free up some money for storm water. Mr. Gainey goes over each line item. Councilman Nettles wanted line item 386-Misc. Equipment defined. Mr. Garland explained that this line item is to cover repairs for smaller equipment that doesn't fall into the bigger categories. Councilman Milling asked if we leased the carts from Allied in line item 293-Allied Waste/Roll Carts"? Mr. Gainey explained that we own the roll carts and we do not lease them. Mr. Gainey stated that Allied provides service for the commercial containers. Mr. Garland said it is time to bid that service out. Councilman Nettles asked if they have enough information to do that so that they could get that done within the next 30 days before the end of the fiscal year? Mr. Garand stated that a bid packet needs to be done which can probably be done in the next 60 days. Mr. Gainey said he has enough information to start putting a bid packet together. He explained that their service has been good, but it has to be bid out to ensure the best rate for our customers. Mr. Gainey moved on to 660-Stormwater. Mr. Gainey explains again about moving the mechanics position to 640 and that 660 will have two employees. He goes over each line item. Councilwoman Baccus wanted to know if storm water is a part of the general fund or a special account. She said if it is a part of the general fund, then she doesn't think it should be. Mr.

Garland said he would check on it and if it is not supposed to be there, he will move it. Councilman Gardner wanted to know the terms on line 384-Storm Water Bond and 386-Vactor truck payment. Mr. Garland said that we had been paying on the bond for a year and a half and it would be paid off in 2038. Mr. Garland said that they have made one payment on the vac truck and they 9 more payments left. Mayor Boyd wanted to know if the vactor truck did any good last night. Mr. Gainey said the truck is making a difference, but there are some areas that need to be addressed. Councilwoman Baccus wanted to know about Reid Street & Chestnut Streets. She said the property owners had agreed for them to come on their property and all that needed to be done was the paperwork. Mr. Gainey said they can't get the truck back to some of those access points and he has to use South Main Street access to it. He said they are working on the problem and have mats to put out down as well, so they won't tear up anybody's yard. Mr. Garland mentioned the storm water issue down on Washington Street at the Harkless house, the sink hole that had caved in about 4 ½ years ago. He said he had met with Ervin Engineering and the city's part would cost over 100,000. He stated that they have met with SCDOT on that twice, but SCDOT has refused to help us with their part. Mr. Garland said the Harkless having been calling for years and if he could get some help from SCDOT, then they could repair the sink hole. Councilwoman Baccus brought up that she was on Farm Street and Kings Edward Avenue today and that the sewage was coming up. Mr. Garland said that was his first time hearing that today. Councilwoman Baccus said every time it rains heavy it comes up and she thinks the City should be checking on it every time it rains heavy. Councilwoman Reed wanted to know what was the reason SCDOT gave for not helping and not making the repairs, and just ignoring us? Mr. Garland said, "They basically keep ignoring us". Mr. Garland said there have been several issues in the past that they won't respond to. Councilwoman Reed asked, "When we approach them do they not have to respond where it can it be documented as for their reasons that they can't do what we're asking them to do"? Mr. Garland said he has had meetings and conference calls with some higher ups in Columbia and Florence. Mr. Garland said that we haven't really brought down our arsenal yet, which would be to write letters to the SCDOT Commissioners, Head of SCDOT and the Governor. He said we are approaching that point now. Mr. Garland said some of them are good and will work with you and some of them don't and that's the way it has been the past years. Councilman Nettles said he thinks we are a few years past that point and those letters need to be going out sooner than later. Councilman Gardner said he thinks it is best if we write down as a Council, our specific questions or concerns and send them a letter. He said if they then don't reply, then escalate the letters. Mayor Boyd said he asked SCDOT specifically to give him a bid because the other bid was outdated. He said standing there with in a 3-5-minute conversation they gave him a $300,000-$500,000 to fix Wells Street. He asked them to let him know what it was going to cost to get the job done and still no response. So again, that's what we're getting. Councilwoman Reed said two people have fallen through the hole at Mrs. Harkless' house and it is time to act. Councilman Milling proposed that after phone call conversations that we have with them, that we follow up with an email that lays out what was discussed so we will have a written record of what was said.

Mr. Lee Andrews begins on his budget starting with salaries. He said the reason for the increase in his budget is that he inherited a new employee. He said he is down in 220.02 and 220.03 because he doesn't think they will spend nearly that much. He explains that postage has gone up a little bit due to their mail outs and that they are pretty much under budget. He said the reason they are over in line item 221 is because they had to have someone come out and look at the telephones. Councilman Milling wanted to know about 220.06 the memorial center tennis courts. He wanted to know if that was the same as the Bill Cain Courts. Mr. Andrews said it was. Councilman Milling asked if the $2,000 that was spent, was it just trying to do some things until we decide what we are going to do about that major expenditure? Mr. Andrews said that some of that money was used for repairs to that building at the tennis court and some of that money should be allocated back to 284-Tennis Program. Councilman Gardner asked was repainting the Memorial Center that the Garden Club lady talked about in the budget? Mr. Andrews said that funds are there for the little bit of paint they need. Mr. Andrews said that his other expenses account 279 is his catch-all account that he went over in but is under in a lot of his other accounts. Councilman Nettles wanted to know what Line Item 262.4-Inland Marine was and Mr. Andrews explained that that was the bridges at Williamson Park. Mr. Andrews explained that the capital outlay pretty much stayed the same. Mr. Andrews moved on to 725 and explains that Williamson Park Fund is funded by the Williamson Park Committee. He says that committee host fundraisers and put all that money back into the park. Mr. Garland says they have their own checking account. Mr. Howard asked Mr. Andrews what his thoughts were on the baseball season for the summer. Mr. Andrews said that he wants our kids to play but I don't want them to play at the extent somebody might get sick or die. He said he just doesn't think that they can comfortably have people out there and screen everybody like they would have to do.

Mr. Garland asked Council if any of them had anything else to say? Councilwoman Baccus asked, "Wasn't there something that Mr. Etheridge was supposed to research for them"? Councilman Nettles said there was a couple of things, but not just from Kevin that they had asked about. Councilwoman Baccus asked Mr. Etheridge wasn't there something he was supposed to research for them and something Lisa was supposed to bring back about a part-time employee? Councilman Nettles said he also was waiting on a response from Chief Washington about a $4,000 difference on something as well. Mr. Etheridge said he had been thrown off the computer during the SCDOT conversation and he will be happy to assist with airing those grievances in a tactful way. Mr. Etheridge asked Councilwoman Baccus was she talking about the gym memberships? Councilwoman Baccus said, "Yes". Mr. Etheridge said there's a statue and he has talked with a lady at the Ethics Commission who is supposed to get an opinion from an advisory and will have her an answer by next week. He said the statue says that the fact we have already done it and the gym memberships are already in place, we don't need to do anything. If we do anything there are a set of rules for people over 30,000 and a set of rules for under 30,000. The rules are such that you can have a separate meeting about it and decide if you want to bid it out. If the Mayor wants to bid on it, he can, but just excuse himself from those meetings. Mr. Etheridge again

pointed out that Council doesn't have to do anything, its up to council what they want to do. Councilwoman Baccus said that she is going to call the Municipal Association herself to get better clarification and she still thinks it's a conflict of interest, but she is going call herself. Mr. Etheridge said he talked to Mr. Charlie Barnio and he directed him to the Ethics Commission, and he will get her the number to the lady he talked to. Councilwoman Reid said in the workshops she has attended dealing with the ethics, that it was quite clear that it was a conflict of interest for an elected official to enter a contract using the financials that you being a council member or elected official having influence. Mr. Segars said, "In all fairness to the Mayor, he bided on that contract years ago and won that bid against the YMCA". Councilwoman Baccus said, "He wasn't the Mayor then, but he is the Mayor now and in fairness, if you're going to do things right and proper, its need to be bid out to be fair and proper". Councilman Nettles asked Mr. Etheridge could he get that information from the right people and send out that information to put that to rest once and for all.

Mayor Boyd said he won that bid about eight or ten years ago which comes out to about $2 per month per family. He also stated whatever Council wanted to do, feel free. Councilwoman Baccus said, "Whatever is being done legally and the proper way is all that matters". Councilwoman Baccus said that never got the questions answered about Ms. Rock's two part-time employees. Mr. Boyd had asked previously about were they able to hire one fulltime person instead of 2-part time people. Mr. Rock said, "One of the part-time people will be leaving at the end of the month and she has already hired another person pending his application and pre employment testing". She stated that she had chosen on having two part-time workers based on what she saw when she had one. Councilman Bryant Gardner stated again that we are not allowed to talk about employees, but you have got to watch what you say. Mr. Etheridge says he thinks we will be safer doing this in executive session. Councilman Gardner said that there were some other finance questions needed that people want a breakdown of different department numbers and if all of council could get a carbon copy of that so they could be informed, he would appreciate that.

Councilman Nettles made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 PM. Councilman Gardner seconded the motion.

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Mayor

ATTEST:

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Clerk & Treasurer