DARLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

BUDGET SESSION MEETING MINUTES

WEDENESDAY, JUNE 1, 2022

Present: Mayor Boyd, Councilman Howard Nettles, Councilwoman Elaine Reed, Councilwoman Shelia Baccus, Councilman John Milling, Councilman Bryant Gardner, Councilman John Segars, Lacie Weatherford and a room full of visitors.

Mayor Boyd called the meeting to order at 5:08 pm and opened with prayer, followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Conclude Revenues and Expenditures

Mr. Payne stated that at the last budget session meeting that the Mayor had advised him to go back and look at cutting some more expenditures and finding some revenue with an emphasis on looking for more ways to give salary increases to the employees. He said that at that last meeting they had asked about the funds from the sanitation and storm water funds. He stated that the revenue from the sanitation fund goes to the general fund and the storm water stays in its own fund, it is its own business enterprise. So, the revenue from sanitation goes to the overall revenues fr the city and any changes there will affect his ability to make raises. He stated that he went through each line item as asked and between the extra money that they will booked between the fellow, $65,000 and the cuts he made they are looking at $125,000 to work with as far as raises go. He said he ran it several different ways. He said the first way he ran was given everybody $1 raise, which would cost about $200,000 and he said he just doesn't have that. He said the second way he ran it, employees making $40,000 or less, would be 2%, $54,000, 3% $76,000 and 5% $120,000. These numbers do not include the water department because they are their own entity, these are general fund numbers. He said just for comparison's sake he ran a few numbers, using a base salary of $35,000. A first responder at 2% plus their premium pay of $4,000 would be an increase of 13%, at 3% it would be an increase of 14%.

Councilman Milling ask what the numbers be backing out the recovery fund. Mr. Payne said that would be $700 at 2%, $1050 at 3% and $1750 at %5 per year increase. Mr. Payne said that he is including the recovery money in those numbers just to help out till next year when we will have more to give raises.

Mayor Boyd said giving an employee $700 more a year is a slap in the face. Councilman Gardner said let's give them a 5% increase and Mayor Boyd said he would rather give them an 8% increase. Mr. Payne said he was just working with what he has because he still has to worry about general operations. He said when talking about regular employees, not 1st responders, at 2% would be a 9% increase, at 3% would be a 10% increase and at 5% would be a 12% increase. Councilwoman Baccus said she did not understand why they keep talking about the recovery money being included in the raises. She said that one time stimulus money does not affect them down the road. She said after next year they won't be getting it. She said the purpose of the stimulus money was not to bail the city till next year when we anticipate more money. Councilman Milling said 2% is insufficient and that we need to look at giving more. Mr. Payne said that there were no raises last year and he is trying to help the people at the bottom of the totem pole first. Mayor Boyd said we got to start trimming what comes out of the hospitality funds. Mr. Payne also brought to councils' attention that the city pays $6400.00 per employee for health insurance and that is also a component for compensation for employment. Mr. Payne stated the budget is an educated guess of numbers. He suggested that they went with 3% to give him a cushion not knowing what the future may bring. He stated that he did not want to go into the reserve fund.

Mayor Boyd asks about line 289 from the Police Department for $78,000. Chief Washington explained that's what we pay the county for the dispatchers. He said it is an across the state thing that has been in place since 911 came available.

Mayor Boyd suggested that we look at what we're paying for insurance for our buildings and see if we can find something cheaper for future savings.

Mayor Boyd asks Ms. Shelia Jones that if she cut her budget down for demolition. She said that if they still wanted the house down on Main Street, they need to leave it at the $50,000. She said she could do some cuts if it meant raises for first responders.

Mayor Boyd ask Mr. Gainey if he needed all that money for paving. Mr. Payne said he puts that money there for spot paving.

Councilwoman Baccus wanted to know why we had two-line items for machines and equipment, line item 227 and 385. After discussion of the line items, Mr. Payne said he could remove line item 276, $3,000 from the budget. Mr. Payne to get with Ms. Pridgen and see if they can be combined.

Mr. Payne said he would like to help the people at the bottom under $40,000 this year and then next year help more when he gets more money to work with.

Mayor Boyd asked could he donate his salary back to the city. Mr. Payne said he would have to talk to the city attorney about it. He also said that he could make him a line item for that if he wanted to do that.

Mr. Payne said he needs for council to come up with something to vote on because he must run the budget in the paper 2 weeks before the end of June.

Mr. Payne said that he will email the numbers for $60,000 and below to council tomorrow. Councilwoman Baccus doesn't see how that is fairly treating the 8 others that make above that.

Council wants Mr. Payne to get the numbers for $60,000 and below for 2, 3 and 5 percent. They are to meet sometime next week to discuss the new numbers and make a decision.

Motioned by Councilman Gardner to adjourn meeting, seconded by Councilwomen Reed. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:07 pm.

Mayor

Secretary

Attest:

CITY OF DARLINGTON
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE COURTROOM/COUNCIL CHAMBERS LOCATED AT 400 PEARL STREET, DARLINGTON, SC TUESDAY JUNE 7, 2022 - AT 6:00 PM

Present: Mayor Curtis Boyd, City Manager John Payne, Councilpersons Sheila Baccus, John Segars, John Milling, Howard Nettles, and Elaine Reed. Also present was Mrs. Lisa Bailey, Police Chief Kelvin Washington, Fire Chief Pat Cavanaugh, Codes Enforcement Officer Ms. Sheila Jones, Recreation Director Mr. Lee Andrews, W&S Superintendent Charles Shugart and Vondell Brockington, Street & Sanitation Superintendent Alex Gainey, Mrs. Lurline Jerry, Mrs. Eva M. Evans, Mr. Kenard McDowell, Mr. Steve Abbott, Mr. William Jackson, Ms. Jacqueline DuBose, Ms. Rosa Hudson, Ms. Brook Sylvester, and other visitors.

Councilman Bryant Gardner was not present at the meeting.

Mr. Bobby Bryant with the News & Press was present.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Prayer by Mayor Boyd followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilwoman Elaine Reed made a motion to approve the minutes of our Regular City Council Meeting on Tuesday May 3, 2022. Councilman Howard Nettles seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Milling, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilman Howard Nettles made a motion to approve the minutes of our Budget Work Session on Tuesday May 24, 2022. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Milling, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilwoman Elaine Reed made a motion to approve the minutes of our Budget Work Session on Wednesday May 25, 2022. Councilman Howard Nettles seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Milling, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Councilman Howard Nettles made a motion to approve tonight's meeting agenda for June 7, 2022. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Milling, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Darlington Downtown Revitalization Association- Lisa Bailey. One of the board members , Ms. Teresa Lott accompanied Mrs. Bailey to the meeting. Ms. Lott works for Clemson Extension and is the State Coordinator for the S.C. Master Gardner's Program. Her office is in the Mozingo Building on Russell Street, and she is a new addition to the board this year. Mrs. Bailey said you may recognize her from the television show "Making It Grow".

Darlington Downtown Revitalization Association

Report for Council – June 7, 2022
The DDRA is continuing their "Bringing Downtown Alive" free concert series **Saturdays on the Square** presented by The City of Darlington.

We had a great kickoff event in May, and next up **Mike Taylor & the Holiday Band (Beach Music Hall of Fame) on Saturday, June 11, from 7 to 10 p.m. on the Public Square.**

The Darlington Cruisers plan to continue their monthly car shows during the concerts, and we have a solid group of food trucks scheduled to attend and other vendors as well. Thanks to Pepsi, Fiber Industries, Belk Funeral Home, and Wilson Senior Care, and thank you to the community for supporting our efforts!

The slate of bands continues with **The Saxxy Keyz (Jazz) on July 9, The Rick Strickland Band (Beach Music Hall of Fame) on August 13, John King (Country – Songwriter for Hootie & the Blowfish in 2015) on September 10.** Finally, **Level 10 Band & Show** will help us close out 2022 at the downtown New Year's Eve Party again this year! Businesses wishing to participate can contact my office.

The Darlington Cruisers will hold their Father's Day Cruise-In on Saturday June 18, 2022, from 8:00am-2:00pm at Joe's Grill.

The DDRA continues our monthly **Member Breakfasts at 8 a.m. on Thursday, June 30, at Taki's Diner, 609 Pearl St.** These meals are at no charge for members and a small $5 fee towards the meal for all others. The event, typically on the last Thursday of the month through October, allow our businesses to build connections and strengthen our local economy.

The DDRA is also making plans to have a Halloween decorating contest for businesses with a top prize of $1,000. Businesses don't have to be on the Square or members of DDRA to participate. More details will be coming out over the summer. Mrs. Bailey said you can sign up to get this type of news directly to your phone, by text or email at buildupdarlington.org/signup.

We promote Darlington and its businesses on social media and through our News Alert System each week. Our alerts reach more than 2,700 people!

GREATER DARLINGTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Ms. Brook Sylvester said Freedom Fest is June 25th in the Square from 4-9 pm. They will have fireworks, they will have a DJ, amusement rides, and retail vendors. This year the amusement rides will be free. The Darlington County Sheriff's office is sponsoring a Men's Health Fair at Cherry Grove Baptist Church on Saturday June 11th at 10:00am – 12:00pm. Darlington First Baptist Church is going to be hosting a free basketball camp July 11 – July 14 from 10:00am – 12:00pm. All ages 7-14 are welcome. Urban Roots Salon & Boutique located at 36 Public

Square is now open. New chamber members: Sweet Chillin' Shaved Ice; Jumping 2 New Heights; Dave's Barnyard BBQ & Sunshine's Sweet Creations.

CITIZENS WISHING TO APPEAR BEFORE COUNCIL (5 MINUTES PER PERSON MAXIMUM)

*Council may have open discussion with citizens after meeting
*Disruptive behavior is not permitted

William Jackson

Mr. Jackson said he has some concerns especially as of late as to the gunfire around Darlington. He said it has gotten a little out of hand as far as he's concerned. Mr. Jackson said he and his wife have lived a couple of blocks from here for about twenty-six years and he's never been really scared to be out in his yard. He said his bedroom is on the front of the house so when you are getting drive by shootings and you're hearing about stuff that's going on, it makes you really nervous. Mr. Jackson said he's never felt nervous in this town. He said he's walked all over the town on and off over the years. He said on April 2nd there was a fair amount of gun fire over in this direction. He said it sounded like two different weapons were going off. Mr. Jackson said the following weekend on April 9th it sounded like the exact opposite of that as far as gun fire and the caliber of the gun and stuff like that, so it sounded like a retaliation to me which really bothers me. And then on May 16th, I think it was somewhere maybe behind the Presbyterian Church there was another shooting. And I think a young girl got hurt but not as a result of the gun fire, but I think something happened in the house and she got hurt. Mr. Jackson said this kind of escalating activity is really concerning. He said he wanted to come and voice his concern about that. Mr. Jackson said just recently on June 3rd he had an issue. I'll call it a petty thief or something like that. He said he noticed a bicycle that was left on the corner, so he went back and looked at his security cameras. At 6:48 in the morning I see a fellow walk by, he drops a bicycle and goes behind a lady's house; he comes out with her lawn mower and walks down the street. Fortunately, I was able to get to the police station and Mr. Melton and Mr. Kiser were able to apprehend pretty quickly the fellow and get the lady's lawn mower back and stuff like that, so I absolutely commend law enforcement for handling that. Mr. Jackson said they told me what the fellow's name was, but it really disturbed me that this guy has a long record and I'm just curious #1 why he's out because 9/12, 1/13, 7/13/, 6/15, 7/17-7/19, 12/19, 3/20, charged with two incidences in 2021 and then 6/22 which was last Friday. Mr. Jackson said, "This here is a lot of stuff. Why is this guy still out on the streets? I don't understand why we're letting trash like this hang around and take stuff we all work for. Mr. Jackson said, "And then last night I was out cutting the water sprinklers off about 11:15 or so, I hear gun fire again. He said it was off in the distance. It could have been in the county because I'm not that far from the county line. He said I hear it fairly. It's over toward the Brunson-Dargan area, it might be in the county, and it might not be in the county. He said I kind of write those off that I hear in that general direction. Mr. Jackson said, "I just wanted to be heard. He said things don't seem to be headed in a safe direction for the citizens of Darlington and I know it's not a question and answer, so I won't get an answer and that's fine. Mr. Jackson said, "One last thing. I was just driving up here from the house and I've requested several times just a little simple thing, you think...there's a trash can at the corner of Sanders & Wells Street by the apartments There

were four people that I've asked for some action on that and it's on the street. It's on DOT side of the stop sign but it doesn't seem like anybody care enough to even get a trash can. He asked, "Is there a leadership issue"? Mr. Jackson said, "I kind of look to you guys to lead, follow through and set ordinances and follow ordinances and stuff like that to keep the town's appearance up. Councilwoman Reed asked, "Tell me about the trash can again". Mr. Jackson said, "If you go to the fire department and look toward the apartments on Sanders and Wells, you can't miss it". Councilwoman Baccus asked, "Is it there all the time. Is that what you're saying"? Mr. Jackson said, "It's been there for probably a year. I think the management company changed hands. He said they use to keep the can in the parking lot but for some reason they moved it a foot and a half or two feet on the street side of the stop sign. Mr. Jackson said I think people come out of their apartments and I think most of the time they just aim at the trash can because there's trash all around it. Mr. Jackson said, "Little stuff it just adds up to not good. He said we had another fellow that use to be with the police department that use to refer to "broken windows" and how run-down houses in area that are unkempt invite not a good element. Councilwoman Reed said, "You've heard us react to the gun violence in our areas and this and that and one of the things I keep pointing to is the availability of these guns to our youngsters. You heard this and I think our focus need to be placed there because it is....I mean I know .....there's a....although most of these things we're fighting now with gun activity, drive by....and young children....the young people that's not supposed to be able to get these things, but yet they are, so I think that those of us who have access to these young children if we get involved to try and see how that is happening. And let's focus on that area in eliminating the availability of these guns to our young children". Councilwoman Reed said on Sunday after church, she had to run to the grocery store and within that time there was shooting a block from her house on Tallulah Street. She said, "We're faced with it and again this was an adult, but they were still young". Councilwoman Reed said, "Just making a point that we all have to be aware, and I appreciate you William for at least acknowledging this and that they have to do something and starts at our families as well". Mr. Jackson said, "I did forget one thing that I did mean to say and that was the reduction in law enforcement that I see riding around. When something happens, I look back at the cameras and I put them on fast forward, and I look and I use to see police officers patrolling. After the theft, of course I went back and looked at several weeks' worth of video, and I just put it on fast forward, but when they come by the house the insignia on the side of the car lights up so its real easy to identify a police officer and I didn't see one".

Jacqueline DuBose – Jumping 2 New Heights

Ms. DuBose said she's the Founder, Director and Administrator of Jumping 2 New Heights Program. She said they have their building which is located at 116 S. Main Street. Ms. DuBose said they are connected with the Chamber of Commerce and the Garden Club as well. She said this program is built on bringing their gifts, talents and abilities of our youth and young adults. She said the building that they will be occupying will be secure. The Chief will come out and see what their vulnerable points so they can have everything boarded up for the security of the children. Ms. DuBose said children cannot bring phones inside the building because she does not want any videotaping and they cannot bring any bookbags into the building. She said there will be a bench for them to put their bookbags on just in case they are carrying something in the

bookbag. She said her security system will be well built to address the activity of the youth. Ms. DuBose said they signed up three hundred kids before Covid and in order to keep the momentum up they practiced at the gym, and they also practiced outside. She said the first two programs they started with were double dutch and karate. In 2023 they plan to enter a double dutch competition in Sumter. Karate is more disciplined. All the children have to go through the Honors Class which is Discipline, Respect and Manners. Ms. DuBose said she did apply for grants with Walmart, Wells Fargo and Grants.gov. She is also looking for sponsorships. The children have to volunteer whether inside at the nursing home or outside with the Garden Club. Ms. DuBose said they should receive the grant from Walmart in late June or July. She said she started doing registration and this is the amount she projected: 70 members at $25 =$1,750; 70 members at $30 =$2,100. Ms. DuBose said the last page of her hand out is what she is asking ($5,000-$10,000). Ms. DuBose said, "This kickoff as far as the back-to-school bash and the 3- or 4-month period I will come back by quarterly and show you the projections of what the money was used for because with my bank account what I'm doing is setting up different accounts in the bank account. Mayor Boyd said we will present this the same way to give to a group starting in July to make a determination.

NEW BUSINESS

a)Maintenance of Wastewater Treatment Plant – Charles Shugart, Water & Sewer Director

Mr. Shugart said we had an emergency situation at our new sewer treatment plant. Sand has infiltrated our sewer lines as it always does, and it's built up in the aeration basin which is the first step of the secondary treatment at the wastewater treatment plant. This is causing short circuiting which means it has less detention time in the aeration basin getting less treatment, so we have what is known as pass through. He said we haven't reached a level of non-compliance yet, but we're real close. It also stops the flow through the aeration basin. Ms. Shugart said this happened three years ago and the city hired a company out of Sumter (Thompson Industrial Services of Sumter, SC) and we've got photographs of what they did to clean it up. They brought a vacuum truck over and had a guy squirt a hose pipe toward the end of the vacuum hose and they walked around vacuuming up the sand. He said this started last week and they tried some experimental things to get it broken open over the weekend. On Sunday afternoon they engaged a couple of contractors to give us these requests for proposals and he had another guy on Monday. Mr. Shugart said, "On Monday I asked Mr. Gainey to go over with our vacuum truck and attempt to clear it and it worked for about a day, then it's back to where it was again". He said we're going to have to get this work done. He said he asked several contractors across the state for request for proposals and he was lucky to get three in here. Thompson Industrial Services of Sumter bid $6,918 for regular work and that's regular hours up to 40 hours and $8,180 per day for anything over 40 hours in a regular normal week and they expect 5 days work. Mr. Shugart said in their proposal they propose to bring one vacuum truck and five men. North American Construction Company out of Quinby, SC bid $11,930 per day. He said they don't say how many people they will bring per day, and they don't own a vacuum truck, so I assume they are going to rent one. Spicer On Call Services of Gilbert, SC bid $6,900 whether they work overtime or regular time, they plan to put two trucks on the job (a vacuum truck and a combination truck). Mr. Shugart said, "I know this guy and he came today and talked to us, and he does this type of work in what's known as the low country down and around

Allendale, Brunson, Gilbert Bamberg area and he proposes to come to work 12 hours a day until he gets the job done. He thinks he can do this in 36 hours based on Van Ward who does our contract operations from Davis & Brown and these photographs from what was done three years ago. Mr. Shugart said, "I'm asking you all to give me a purchase order for three days' worth of work for them". He said that's not going to be the total cost; there's going to be some incidentals and out of pocket from us also. We've got to buy bridging material; we'll have to build those little ramps and we'll have cost draining the basins prior to their arrival. Councilwoman Baccus asked Mr. Shugart to repeat the quote from the first guy. Mr. Shugart went back over the quotes. Mr. Payne said these are all per day quotes. Mr. Shugart said, "It's a request for proposals. It's really not a request for bids because we don't really know what the conditions are, and no one can predict until we get the job, how long it's going to take". Councilwoman Baccus asked, "North American is saying $11,950"? Councilman Nettles said, "North American is $11,950 per day, right"? Mr. Shugart said, "Per day". Councilwoman Baccus said, "Per day and they don't even have a truck". Mr. Shugart said, "No ma'am". Councilman Nettles said, "And they don't have a contingency plan". Mr. Shugart said, "$11,930 per day and they're going to work 10 hours". Councilwoman Baccus said, "Ain't no need wasting no time to even talk about them they don't even have a truck". Councilman Nettles asked, "So what's the plan if Spicer goes over the four days....Mr. Shugart said, "He said he'll charge the same amount until the job is done". He said, I know this guy, he'll stay on the job until it's complete. Councilman Milling said, "When this is done does that take care of us for another three years"? Mr. Shugart said, "We sure hope so. I think we ought to be more proactive instead of reactive. I think what we ought to do is create a, and it's not difficult to do, a measurement device to find where the sand is and how quickly it's building up and we either need to purchase or rent dredging equipment and dredge it every six months. He said dredging equipment is a pump that can pump sand. Mr. Shugart said, "As we pull this device into where the sand is, it vacuums the sand out and pumps it over to one of our filters which we have nearly 100 acres of filters out there and eight of them, so we can do that work". Mr. Shugart said we need to be more proactive with this and that's going to be a completely different program for the wastewater treatment plant. He said we are probably going to bid labor to do this in the future and budget for the purchase or rental of that equipment. He said rental is better because we're not going to need it 100% of the time and we don't want to maintain it. Councilwoman Reed said, "Somewhere along the line I was told this was one of the biggest things that Davis & Brown did was out there....they don't have anything to do with this wastewater treatment plant"? Mr. Shugart said, "They operate our wastewater treatment plant, but this situation is due to infiltration and inflow which is commonly known as I&I and that brings sand into our sewer collection system which is then conveyed to the wastewater treatment plant. Councilwoman Reed said, "I'm still not understanding that if they operate the thing they don't know how to.....Councilman Nettles said, "you're asking if they operate it aren't they responsible for it". Councilwoman Reed said, "Yeah, I mean". Councilman Nettles said, "that's what she's asking". Mr. Shugart said, "No, they aren't". Councilwoman Reed said, "So, because every time something goes wrong you come back, and we have to get a contractor to go in there and straighten things out". Mr. Shugart said, "Yes ma'am". Councilwoman Reed said, "It seems like if they are operating we should know before it gets to this emergency type situation. That's the part that I'm saying. They are in the budget all the way through. So, I would like something at

some point and time, I know we've got to go ahead and get this straighten out right quick, but that needs to be looked at as everything else. Councilman Milling asked, "Do you see these as operational issues or just one of those things that happens consistently with treatment plants"? Mr. Shugart said, "As our collection system continues to deteriorate this is going to be a rapid increase in the sand entering the system. Mr. Shugart said in my part of the world we don't get sand other than where it crosses creeks; in this part of the world, there's sand everywhere so it could be coming from any of our sewer collapses which we've had several of this year since I've been here. He said we probably had some that we don't know about along with other places such as a manhole with a hole in the top of it. He said, "Believe it or not, a manhole with a hole in the top of it, is illegal, it's not supposed to be, but we've got them, and we've got to get rid of all of them at some point". He said there are a lot of other reasons why we can have I&I, but it's happening in our collection system. Councilman Segars said, "Are you saying this sand is infiltrating in different parts of the city and flowing down to the sewer plant"? Mr. Shugart said, "Yes sir, it is". He said we've thought about and looked at adding a grit chamber which will collect all of this sand at our old wastewater treatment plant, and this may be a good quick fix. It will be a basin where the flow slows down, the sand settles out and this basin will be built wide enough with ramps on each end and you just drive a backhoe in to one side, collect the sand and go out the other side and dump it in a dump truck. He said, and this would need to be done every so often. Councilman Milling asked, "Are we looking at $40,000 for this project"? Mr. Shugart said, "Yes Sir. I'm really hoping to keep it under $35,000". Councilman Milling said, "Well, $6,900 times 5 is right at $35,000". Mr. Shugart said, "Mr. Spicer said he can do it in three days and we're going to have some out-of-pocket expenses. He said we're going to have to do some work ourselves-build bridging, we've got other stuff we've got to do". Mr. Shugart said, "We're acting as our own general contractor rather than calling an engineering firm and say, *"go do this work"*. Mr. Payne asked, "How much do you estimate we're saving by doing it ourselves"? Mr. Shugart said, "About half of it. If we were to call somebody up this would cost $70,000-$80,000". Councilwoman Reed said, "But that's what it equals out because we're still paying somebody to operate. We're paying them and we still got to do this right here so to me it's equaling out. Councilman Milling asked the name of the company that had the low bid. Mr. Shugart said, "It's Spicer on Call". **Councilman Milling made a motion to approve paying Spicer on Call Services of Gilbert, SC the sum of $6,900 a day until he can get this wastewater treatment problem taken care of not to exceed $40,000. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Nettles, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted to approve the motion.** Councilwoman Baccus said, "Just for the record, just for information the main one who maintain our wastewater treatment plant is the one who gave us the highest bid, Davis & Brown.

b)Residential Rental Business License Discussion – Mayor Curtis Boyd

Mayor Boyd said, "We mentioned this once before so for the record my goal behind this is not to try to raise a bunch of money or anything of that nature, but a business when they come into town they have to have a business license, permit, etc. and each year they pay a business license. He said the business license gives the fire department and codes department the right to come in and check our business. Mayor Boyd said, "When a person owns a multiple number of houses town or apartments, or complexes of that nature they are conducting business in our

town. There's already an ordinance on file that would give us the right to have these businesses to have to purchase a business license and actually become a business". Mayor Boyd said, "Again my goal behind this is just discussion tonight. He said if I own five houses I'm already paying higher taxes on that, the city is collecting taxes on that. We're not here to try to collect a larger fee off of a business license on it, but if they have to pay a basic $50 business license because they own five houses or whatever, that then opens up the door that codes department and fire department can then go in for an inspection just like they go in an inspect other houses. Whereas right now they can't go into these apartments that some people from out of town and so forth own. They don't care what they look like, and they're run down, and we don't have right to go in and actually look and see if the living conditions are good for these people. And they are still conducting business inside of our city and to try and cure that my suggestion was that we look and see if we can come up with some type of rule that these owners will actually have to have a business license. Councilman Nettles asked, "Would that be for one house or multiple houses"? Mayor Boyd said, "Again, that would be up to council but again my thought was if I have one house I'm not doing business. You are in a sense in business, but my suggestion was if you own more than one house that you're renting out then you have actually become a business. If you've got multiple homes that you're renting out and apartments and so forth. Mayor Boyd said if I own one house or more I gong to pay additional taxes on that house, 6% compared to 4%. They are already paying a higher tax rate on it, so again, it's not for us to go out and try to collect a big lump sum off of them. My thought was charge them a $50 business license per year and then it opens the door that the fire department and codes can go and inspect the buildings on a regular basis. Councilman Milling said, "From the standpoint of creating an ordinance that would require the business that would then give us permission to go in and check the premises we will probably be expected by whomever the tenant is to be inspecting for wiring, smoke detectors, various different things so we're going to need to be careful about any ordinance we draw and be sure that we don't create an ordinance that we cannot have the personnel to go out and do the things that we would be called upon to do". Sheila Jones said, "I think that's it's unrealistic given the personnel that we have to place the burden of inspecting....we're not home inspectors. We do inspect for code purposes. We inspect for certificates of occupancy; we inspect for construction. We do inspect for a lot of things. Ms. Jones said, "My thought as soon as I heard this was not necessarily a business license for the purposes of the ability to go in and do an inspection to make sure smoke detectors are in, to make sure there's not hazards that are in the home. So, I'm thinking along the lines of the water department has a program where restaurants have to submit a backflow test to the water department periodically to ensure that the backflow is working properly, and the grease traps are working so that it doesn't cause a burden to our sewer system. Ms. Jones said, so it might be something that we could consider having multi-family management companies or property owners who own several properties that periodically they have to submit to the codes department an inspection report to include specific things such as smoke detectors, their location, service panels and they have to submit that to the office and those we can look over, but to physically go to every house for every rental property for every owner is an unrealistic.....Councilman Milling asked, "Is there a realistic way to verify what a property owner may put down for multiple properties"? Ms. Jones said, "There has to be...at some point...I mean, let's be honest, we can drive down the road and know which houses are derelict. We

can go down the road and know which property owners are not maintaining them. If they aren't maintaining the outside, they certainly aren't maintaining the inside". Councilwoman Baccus said, "So who would we require to inspect it"? Ms. Jones said, "So let's say there's a house; we have two houses; one house they turn in an inspection report, and they have all of these pictures. We can ask for pictures of every room, pictures of the smoke detectors...we can look at the pictures and say, ok there is or there isn't a smoke detector, etc. We can look at all those things and say this one's a problem. This is a hazard to the community, now I'll go and physically inspect it, condemn it, violate it, do whatever needs to be done with it to prompt the property owner to take action so we don't have homes that our citizens should not be living in. Councilwoman Baccus said, "But if you've never seen the inside of that house how do you know the pictures I sent you is from that house"? Ms. Jones said, "Well, there's got to be a certain kind of an honor system that goes on". She said if someone sends me pictures of the house and it looks pristine or it looks halfway decent, but the outside looks like I wouldn't want my mother to live in, then obviously those pictures aren't going to line up with each other. Mayor Boyd asked, ,"Who would send the pictures". Ms. Jones said the property owner would send the pictures in and if you want to go there then we could ask the property owner to send a third-party inspector much like third party contractors have to do a backflow test. Councilwoman Reed said, " It appears to me we get into all of the details about something that we haven't even got to establish. We're talking about inspections of something....you said a discussion. Residential rental property licensing. So, how would we first of all determine what rental. What are we talking about here? The companies that already got management; they don't have business licenses. I'm just asking". Now, are we looking for Elaine Reed....I have property right next door to me and my cousin that died and I've got that one and we might rent that. So, does Elaine Reed now have to have a license to say rent it"? Mayor Boyd said, "The suggestion was that if Elaine Reed.....Councilwoman Reed interrupted and said, "Let's get to that". Mayor Boyd said, "If Elaine Reed bought a house and you've got one house that you're renting, you're not really in business. And the thought behind all this is we have a lot of people in our town that have multiple houses, they have multiple apartments. This was an idea so I'm bringing it to the table for a discussion. Please help me and help the city to determine what do we need to do because when people call us they say, so and so will not take care of my house, it's a mess and we know it's a mess. But the fire or codes department cannot just walk in there. When the codes department calls the landowner and say you need to do it, then they turn around and make that person leave. He said that shouldn't be happening. Mayor Boyd said we have apartments in town that are owned by other people outside of town. They don't care what our town looks like they are just collecting more money. It's just a drug pit, a mess pit and it's a mess. What I'm asking is that we figure out a way to clean it up. He said I have been in business for 33 years until this year nobody ever walked in my door and said let me check your fire department, your thing because they were told before not to do it. Now they are doing it. Mayor Boyd said, "We are under manned and I'm not asking that you go and do every one, but if you've got the opportunity to go in there, the door is open, you go in and get it". Councilwoman Reed said, "Your statement here is of concern to me. You said 33 years, never been inspected, nobody came and then now it is because of what. Why are they doing it now"? Mayor Boyd said because I asked for the fire department to start making sure they are being inspected". Councilwoman Reed said, "You asked for that to be done. Let's set up a criterion

then, if you own more than five houses in one name let's begin there to establish some kind of guideline or basis as to.....(both Reed & Mayor are talking at the same time) to require a license or something to that before we get into.....once you get a license those things are already set up, right"? Ms. Jones said, "You're talking about something completely different. When you're talking about tenant and landlord, you have tenant/landlord law that is completely its own animal. As far as going into a house I went into a house on Tallulah Street last week because the property owner said he's not fixing it, he's not doing anything, and I shouldn't have to live like this. Ms. Jones said, "So we do inspect those Mayor. We do inspect when a tenant calls or a citizen call and says my landlord is not doing any maintenance to my property;; my landlord is not doing this, my landlord is not doing that. I go in there and I decide...I can violate him and get him to fix this if there's leak issues; if there's electrical or structural issues. Ms. Jones said I went to one house, and she said, "it's nasty and I said, "Yes ma'am it is nasty however you have to clean your house too. The landlord has to do their part and you have to do your part. She said, "so, it's not like we don't availability to go into tenant property. If the tenant calls and complain we go into the tenant's property because they ask us to, and we do violate landlords if it's something within our jurisdiction. Councilwoman Reed said, "All I want to establish here is that you have policy set up for these things.....
What the mayor has just outlined and what you were saying... Sheila said, no ma'am so...councilwoman Reed said, I mean everything... because you're answering... I mean you were outlining whatever the policy is about how you would handle a rental that deals with the landlord and a disgruntled person inside. Councilwoman Reed said, what we're asking for is a license for some type of rental. Mayor Boyd said, what I'm asking for is, I feel like that if I'm renting 2 to 3,4,5 houses or an apartment complex, without any notice every other town and even in Darlington they walk in and go hey I'm with the fire department we're here to inspect, and they inspect. I feel like that should be done but with going into somebody's house I understand you can't just walk into somebody's house and say hey I'm here today so you would have to let the landlord know or whatever you came up with but somewhere along the line i'm just looking for a way to protect our citizens and to protect our town from people that are coming into our town and buying houses and complexes and stuff and then they don't care, that's all I'm looking for. Mayor Boyd said I'm not looking to wear Sheila out because I know she's got more than she can handle on her plate. she can't run into everybody's house, and I know Charles can't run into everybody's house. He said I'm just asking for a way....(councilwoman Reed and somebody else is having a conversation in the background while Mayor Boyd is talking, and you can't hear) I was just asking for a way to think about it. That's what the discussion was tonight. Is there a way to do it is the business license the way to do it Councilman Nettles asked, "Sheila given your knowledge can you take some time, if you have it of your schedule, and just think this process through that he's asking to do to see if there's something that we can do in correlation with what you already do to make something like that happen or doable "? Ms. Jones said absolutely. Mayor Boyd said my understanding was that when people did call a lot of times there wasn't anything that you could do then the landlord got mad at them and made them leave. Ms. Jones said, "there's always that option now we're talking about landlord tenant law because if I go to a landlord and I say I'm violating you on x,y &z, you have 14 days to fix the problem and especially if we're talking about structural things or anything, he can say because most of our tenants, not all, our apartments aren't, but most of our tenants at this point are

month to month. So yes, that owner can say here's a notice to vacate; you have 30 days to move. And he or she doesn't have to have any reason why and they have to move. She said I'm not saying that we shouldn't violate but there's always that option that the owner can say no move I'm going to move you out if you want me to put money into this house, which they should anyway because it's their capital investment, now I'm going to put money in it, now I'm going to charge more and now we're going to carve out homes that people can't maybe afford. Mayor Boyd said, "But at this moment do you have the authority"? Ms. Jones said, "Absolutely. I have the authority to violate people . Yes, I have the authority on some things, on structural issues, on code issues, I have the authority to violate a landlord and force him to fix his house or condemn it because those are the choices". Mayor Boyd said you can be thinking about that. We'll bring that back up again.

BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS - LISA BAILEY

Mr. Mike Harris would like to be nominated to the city planning commission; other commission members recommended him, and he is retired and available and has a solid business background. **Councilman Milling made a motion to approve Mr. Harris for a seat on the Planning and Zoning Board. Councilman Nettles seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Reed, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

Mrs. Sandra Chace would like to be nominated to the City Historic Landmarks Commission. She has an interest in old houses, has done several with her husband and lives in one. **Councilman Nettles made a motion that we nominate Mrs. Sandra Chace to the Historic Landmarks Commission, and Councilman Milling seconded the motion. . Councilpersons Baccus, Reed, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

Mrs. Peggy Cohen would like to be nominated to the City Beautification Board and she has faithfully served on the Williamson Park Committee in the past. **Councilwoman Reed made a motion to accept Mrs. Cohen's application for the Beautification Board. Councilman Nettles seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted for the motion.** Councilwoman Baccus asked, Didn't I hear something a while back saying that you could only serve on one board at a time? Mrs. Lisa Bailey said, "For most of them, yes". She said there is one seat on the Board of Zoning Appeals that is listed in our ordinance that says somebody from the historic landmarks commission should also serve on the board of zoning appeals. Councilwoman Baccus said, "But every other board only one person can serve on....Mrs. Bailey said, "Generally that's how we do it, so that more people can participate". She said some of these folks have been on these boards for a long time and we just have to kick people off. Councilwoman Baccus said, "So, none of these on here now is on any other boards, is that what you're saying"? Mrs. Bailey said, "I don't believe so. Do you mean the ones I'm bringing up"? Councilwoman Baccus said, "Yes". Mrs. Bailey said, "They're not".

Mrs. Bailey said Mr. Jack Weaver would like to be nominated to the city Williamson Park Committee. He is a former Marine and avid outdoorsman. **Councilman Nettles made a motion to nominate Mr. Weaver to the City Williamson Park committee. Councilman Milling seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Reed, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

Mrs. Anna DeWitt would like to be nominated to the City Beautification Board; she is currently the president of the Darlington Garden club, and she is retired from EMS. **Councilman Milling made a motion to approve Mrs. DeWitt. Councilman Nettles seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Reed, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**
Ms. T.H. Pierce would like to be nominated to the City Planning Commission. She serves as the Chief Risk Officer at SAFE Federal Credit Union in Sumter. She does not live in the city. She lives on Georgetown Road in Darlington County. Councilwoman Baccus asked, "Do they have to live in the city to be on the board"? Mrs. Bailey said, "They should". Councilwoman Reed said, "So let's just eliminate it and move on". ***(No action taken)***
Mrs. Linda Beckham would like to be nominated to the City Beautification Board. She is a previous Garden Club president, and she holds the certification of master gardener. **Councilwoman Reed made a motion that we accept Mrs. Linda Beckham application to serve on the City Beautification Board. Councilman Nettles seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**
Mayor Boyd thanked Peggy & Andy Cohen for all of the work they've done recently. For volunteering and fixing and paying for the sprinkler systems out by Verizon and a number of other places out by Lamar Road. They've worked long and hard, trimmed up by Verizon.

CITY VEHICLE WRAPS PROOFS - MRS. LISA BAILEY

Mrs. Bailey said at your desk today there were some samples you all asked me to have the contractor produce for you to choose from. You previously voted to start with doing the two garbage trucks (both sides) which is $480 per side. She said we can do one... the same thing on each side of the truck. We can do the same thing on both trucks. You can do different things on every truck. It depends on what you all prefer. Councilman Milling asked, " You've got four proposals and four sides "? Lisa said, "Yes". Lisa said she liked shop local #2 & History #1. Councilwoman Baccus asked, who's doing this. Mrs. Bailey said, "This is the News & Press. They won the bid in 2021". Councilwoman Baccus said, "We went from this being a project to bring in money to spending money". She said it started out and was supposed to be bringing money into the city, right"? And now we're going to throw away city money on the side of a truck. Mrs. Bailey said, "That's up to y'all". Mayor Boyd said, "It's not throwing away money, we're trying to make the city look better and encourage people to shop. If other people see it working then they might want to advertise". Councilwoman Baccus said, "Nobody with a legitimate business, that's a respectable business is gonna put their name on the side of a trash truck". Mayor Boyd said, "Well, if you stay negative about it, probably not". Councilwoman Baccus said, "It ain't negative. You started out a year ago saying it was going to make $50,000; it ain't made a dime". Mayor Boyd said, "We're gonna work on it". Mayor Boyd asked the council for their thoughts. Councilwoman Reed said, "At this point though we've already voted to do this...to advertise. Mayor Boyd said, "Yes". Councilman Milling said, "I don't think so". Councilwoman Baccus said, "We didn't vote to advertise". Councilman Milling said, "We've just been getting proposals". Mrs. Bailey said, "You just gave me the suggestion that you wanted to do one or two vehicles and start with that". Councilman Nettles asked Mr. Payne what fund that would come out of. Mr. Payne said, "That could come out of H-Tax". Councilman Nettles said, "I'm indifferent". Councilwoman Reed said, "Obviously we're not going to make a decision tonight".

FIRST READING TAX ANTICIPATION NOTE, ORDINANCE 2022-07 – JOHN PAYNE, CITY MANAGER

Mr. Payne told Council they've done this in the past and all this does is give the city the ability to have a line of credit in case something happens, and we need an infusion of cash.

Councilman John Milling made a motion to approve First Reading of the Tax Anticipation Note, Ordinance 2022-07. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Nettles, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

FIRST READING TAX LEVY MILLAGE 129.9793, ORDINANCE 2022-08 – JOHN PAYNE, CITY MANAGER

Mr. Payne said this is required. This is levying the millage for this year, nothing has changed. He said the millage will stay at 129.9793. **Councilman John Milling made a motion to approve First Reading of Tax Levy Millage Ordinance 2022-08 with the millage to be 129.9793. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Nettles, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION For the purpose of receiving legal advice on Hospitality Tax Funds. City Council may or may not vote after executive session.

Councilman John Milling made a motion to go into executive session at 7:10 pm . Councilman Howard Nettles seconded the motion. Councilpersons Reed, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion. Councilwoman Baccus left the room before the vote was taken.

5 Minute Break

Councilman Howard Nettles made a motion to end the executive session at 7:52 PM. Councilman John Milling seconded the motion. Councilpersons Reed, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd approved the motion to adjourn the executive session.

REMINDER

Tuesday July 12, 2022, at 6:00 PM - Regular Monthly Meeting of Darlington City Council

ADJOURN

Councilman Howard Nettles made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 PM. Councilwoman Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Milling, Segars, and Mayor Boyd voted for the motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mayor

ATTEST:

Gloria B. Pridgen

Clerk & Treasurer

CITY OF DARLINGTON
400 PEARL STREET, DARLINGTON,SC.
PUBLIC HEARING & SPECIAL MEETING
MONDAY JUNE 27, 2022, AT 6:00 PM

Present: Mayor Boyd, City Manager John Payne, Councilpersons Nettles, Baccus, Gardner, Milling, Reed and Segars. Also present was Mrs. Lisa Bailey, Mr. Alex Gainey, Charles Shugart, Jimmy Davis, Sheila Jones, Fire Chief Pat Cavanaugh, Lee Andrews, Gloria Hines, and Jannie Lathan.

Mayor Boyd welcomed everyone to the public hearing and special city council meeting.

Prayer was led by Councilman John Segars followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Councilman John Milling made a motion to approve the meeting agenda for tonight's public hearing and special council meeting. Councilman Howard Nettles seconded the motion. Councilpersons Reed, Baccus, Gardner, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Mayor Boyd opened the floor for the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING ON ORDINANCE 2022-06 (2022-23 BUDGET)

Mrs. Bailey said she did not receive any comments

PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX ANTICIPATION NOTE, ORDINANCE 2022-07

Mrs. Bailey said she did not receive any comments

PUBLIC HEARING ON ORDINANCE 2022-08 TAX LEVY 129.979 MILLS

Ms. Rock said she did not receive any comments.

There were no comments from the public, so Mayor Boyd closed the public hearing.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

SECOND READING ON ORDINANCE 2022-06 (FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET -JOHN PAYNE, CITY MANAGER)

Mr. Payne said, "In our last workshop the marching orders that I received from council was to try and get raises for everyone, so I went back and worked through the budget, and I have done that". Mr. Payne told council he will explain the different raises that he came up with and to keep in mind this is only in base pay. This has nothing to do with ARP, longevity, or anything. Mr. Payne said for first responders making less than $60,000 a year will get a 5% increase. First responders making more than $60,000 a year, there's a 2% increase. Mr. Payne said, "For

administrative, which will be everybody else, less than $60,000 there's a 3% increase and for administrative staff over $60,000 there's a 2% increase. Mr. Payne said this does not include him. He said he's a contractual employee and is not included in this. Mr. Payne said, "And that's a balanced budget". Mayor Boyd said, "I would like to have seen more, but I understand that you dug, dug, dug, and that's all you could give me". Mr. Payne said, "At this point, if I had gone any further I would have been cutting into the bone". Councilman Nettles asked, "So is this inclusive of or not the proposed increases for water/sewer and garbage collection"? Mr. Payne said, "That's inclusive. Without those raises, those increases I can't make these raises work. Councilwoman Reed asked, "Is there any way for the...other than the first responders that's under $60,000 to have more than 3%"? Councilwoman Reed said, "That was the only thing that I really wanted.....Mr. Payne said, "I did try it at four and the numbers just didn't work. He said keep in mind, I can't do everything in one year. Next year when we're standing here I'm going to try and do this again, but to try to make it all in one year, the numbers just won't work unless I start cutting into operations and then that's going to hurt city operations". Mr. Payne said, "Keep in mind, on top of that 3% they will still get the ARP money if they qualify.

Ms. Jannie Lathan asked, "Mayor are we in the public hearing now"? Mayor Boyd said, "We just did it". Ms. Lathan asked, you already had the public hearing? Mayor Boyd said, "Yes ma'am". Ms. Lathan asked, "In five minutes"? Mayor Boyd said, "When we asked, nobody showed". Ms. Lathan asked, "May I make a comment"? Mayor Boyd said, "sure". Ms. Lathan said, "Did I just understand the City Manager saying that there's a proposal in this year's budget to increase our water and sewer rates again. Mr. Payne said, "Yes". Mayor Boyd said, "That was explained before. Not for anybody under 5,000 gallons of water. Mr. Payne said, "Anything over 5,000 gallons which will exclude low-to-moderate income people, people on fixed income. They are generally around 3,000-4,000. Mayor Boyd said if they use under 5,000 gallons of water their bill won't increase. Ms. Lathan said, "I have a real concern as a resident and a taxpayer because if this was announced to have a public hearing at 6:00, I came in at 6:05 and you conducted a public hearing in five minutes and there's significant items in the budget that's going to effect residents, I have a question about the process. In fact, in due process". Ms. Lathan said, "How many citizens will know that you are increasing our rates after you've increased them 40% in the middle of a pandemic and after a number of us came before council and pleaded that you take some of the American rescue funds which was designed specifically to help residents heal throughout the United States and not just the City of Darlington who were dealing with hardships related to the pandemic. And this was one of the most atrocious things that I thought any municipality could do was to impose an over 40% increase in vital services (water and sewer). Ms. Lathan asked, "Is there anything in this budget that addresses taking some of that money and putting it back in the water and sewer department or are you just going to ram through ir-regardless of the resident input and increase our water and sewer rates again"? Ms. Lathan said, "Please address that Mayor". Mayor Boyd said, "I'm not sure how someone can think that with everything that's going up as much as it's gone up the city didn't go up on its water bill for years. We were forced to go up on the water bill year before last. Last year we didn't go up on the water bill. With everything going up like it is now, we still had to go up some more. We didn't go up much this time, but they are going up more again, but not on people with 5,000 gallons or less. Mayor Boyd said, "We have not used any of the rescue

money yet, other than....Mr. Payne said, "Premium pay and a few small items". Mayor Boyd said, "That money can't be given....There's no way...the world doesn't work that way to where we can give people their money back, lower their water bills, and still fix all the things that Mr. Shugart has a multiple long list of that has been taken care of since he's been here. So, the problem is things have been broken and not fixed and we're trying and are getting things fixed. We can't just take that money and lower everybody's water bills as much as we would love to but we did work on it to where he's got it fixed to anybody with 5,000 gallons or less (which is the majority of the people that are on a fixed income). Ms. Lathan said, "Mayor, with all due respect, that's what those federal dollars were flowed to municipalities throughout the United States to address. So those were additional funds to address hardship cases related to the Pandemic so that residents like the City of Darlington wouldn't have to go through the additional hardship. So, you can take those American Rescue funds, put them in the water and sewer department and lower our rate. There's nothing that's preventing you from doing that because that's precisely what the funds were allocated for". Mr. Payne said, "Mr. Mayor, I'll remind you and council months ago we went over these dollars and the vast majority of them are dedicated to the water/sewer, streets & sanitation, and storm water. He said we are going to use a lot of the funds for matches for grants. Mr. Payne said, "May I suggest we follow our agenda, Mr. Mayor".

Councilman Milling said, "Mr. Mayor I of course don't like the fact and none of us do that there is an increase in our water rates, but we have employees, and we have to make...we're trying to give raises to these employees to keep them as good employees. The numbers have been looked at on several occasions and we have trimmed things to the bones as best we can. We can't operate water & sewer or street & sanitation without having the increases in this budget that must be met. **Councilman John Milling made a motion to approve Second Reading Ordinance 2022-06 fiscal year 2023 budget. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion.** Councilman Nettles & Councilwoman Baccus took a moment to think whether or not they would vote to approve the budget. **Councilman Bryant Gardner, Councilman John Segars and Mayor Boyd voted to approve the fiscal year 2023 budget.** Councilman Nettles said, "I just want to confirm the numbers to make sure I understand. If someone uses 5,000 gallons or more they will see a 10% increase basically $3.76"? Mr. Payne said, "It will go from $3.42 to $3.76 keeping in mind that our administrative fee will stay fixed. Councilman Nettles said, "Same question for sanitation for a residential customer. Where is that fee increase"? Mr. Payne said, "It will go from $28.50 per month to $35.00. He said keep in mind that the water & sewer stays inside that fund, but the sanitation goes to the general fund. Councilman Nettles asked, "For stormwater, we're going from $6.50 to $10.00". Mr. Payne said, "Yes sir, so that's $3.50". Councilman Nettles asked, "Are there any other numbers because the last time we did this (you weren't here of course) the numbers didn't come out to what we all voted for, and I just want to make sure we don't repeat that again. Councilman Nettles said, "If I vote to approve this, folks are going to know that those are the three numbers that we just talked about...Mr. Payne said, "Yes sir. There is no formula or anything else sitting in the background. These are the flat numbers. Councilman Nettles asked Mr. Payne to reiterate again if this was the only charges. Mr. Payne said, "Anything under 5,000 gallons and below, stays where it is now." Councilman Gardner said, "Minus the stormwater fee". Mr. Payne said, "I'm talking simply water & sewer". Councilman Nettles asked if everyone would see the sewer increase. Mr. Payne

said, "No, it's the same. The sewer for 5,000 gallons and above would go from $4.90 to $5.39. He said it's 5,001 gallons and above". Councilwoman Reed said, "Stormwater is the one that we get what....how much money that...Mr. Payne said, "That will go from $6.50 to $10.00. Councilman Nettles said, "So if I'm using 5,000-10,000 gallons and then you're looking at the sanitation and the storm water, what is my monthly increase going to be"? Mr. Payne said, "$10.00. That's the sanitation at $6.50 which is $28.50 to $35.00. The stormwater from $6.50 to $10.00 which is $3.50. $6.50 and $3.50 is $10.00. So, if your water usage is 5,000 gallons or less you will not see an increase there, but if it's 5,001 you will see that 10% increase up to 10,000 gallons. Councilman Nettles said, "So again someone on the high end is looking at a $10.00 increase"? Mr. Payne said, "If you'll remember I did this comparison and I showed 6,000 gallons and 11,000 gallons; again, this is just water and sewer. It's not storm water. At 6,000 gallons the increase will be $4.98 a month. And at 11,000 gallons you're looking at $18.26. Councilman Nettles said I just want to make sure the numbers are static. Councilman Nettles continued to ask about the charges. Mr. Payne said we need to have a study done to determine what we need to be charging for our storm water because what I understand some of the larger big box stores are paying very insignificant amounts. Mayor Boyd said, "From what Howard is asking I believe, Howard correct me if I'm wrong, are we at a flat rate? It's not a percentage per gallon; when it hits 5,000 it's that....Mr. Payne said, "From 5,001 – 10,000 it will be $3.76 for water and $5.39 for sewer; above 10,000 gallons it will go from 3.42 to $4.10 which is a 20% increase. On the sewer side from $4.90 to $5.88. Councilman Nettles said, "We need to do a study at some point. Do we really have to increase stormwater $3.50 at this point"? Councilman Nettles said he's not trying to be difficult he's just having a problem with the numbers. Ms. Lathan asked Mayor Boyd if she could ask a question. Councilman Nettles said, "So if I vote no people who want get increases will be mad at me and if I vote yes people who sees an increase in water and sewer will be mad, so I'm having a dilemma with this". Mr. Payne said, "Remember around January or so I prepared for the mayor an analysis of the last eight years for water, sewer & storm water, lost $2.7 million; that money has to come from somewhere. At this point, it comes from the customers, the rate payers. If it has to comes from somewhere else, it comes from the taxpayer. Councilwoman Baccus asked, "How much did the water department earn this year"? Mr. Payne said, "I couldn't tell you, we haven't done our audit yet". Councilwoman Baccus said, "So, you don't know whether you're in the hole or not at the end of the year when you're doing the budget"? Mr. Payne said, "I don't have the audit yet". Councilwoman Baccus said, "so we don't know whether the water department made money or lost money"? Mr. Payne said, "I can't give you an estimate. I'm not going to do that in public because I don't know the numbers". Councilwoman Baccus said, "So why do you want to raise the water bills if you don't know whether you made money or lost money"? Mr. Payne said, "Because my costs are exceeding 10% annually. Councilwoman Baccus said, "Well how do you know that"? Mr. Payne said, "When I get calls from city councilmembers where they have water and sewer running down their streets, I have to have the money to be able to go do it". Councilwoman Baccus said, "My question again is, how do you know whether you did or not? You just said you don't know whether you did or not". Mr. Payne said, "My audit is not complete. In fact, it's not the end of the fiscal year. But I know that Mr. Shugart....how much are our cost going up"? Councilwoman Baccus said, "So, you're doing a raise on a whim"? Mr. Payne said, "No ma'am, we've done an analysis". Councilwoman Baccus said, "I see that, but I

don't see where you're showing me that we're losing money. A few minutes ago you told us about what happened the last eight years; we're focusing on this year, we're not worried about what happened the last eight years so we're trying to understand if we lost money or not". Mr. Payne asked Mr. Shugart how our expenses are going up". Mr. Shugart said, "All expenses are going up. Everything is going up. Fuel is up over 78%; meters went from $180.00 to $500.00; pipe went from less than $5.00 a foot to about $15.00 a foot. PVC pipe goes up with fuel costs. (Mr. Shugart is still talking and Mayor Boyd started talking at the same time) Mayor Boyd said, "None of us wanted to go up on the price on anybody. What we're going up is minimum and we know that we're living in a world right now where everything has just skyrocketed, and we've got to do something. We can't continue to sit and wait again and all of a sudden hit everybody with a 40% increase or whatever we did the last time. Mayor Boyd said we didn't go up last year and we tried to fix it this time to where anybody that's 5,000 or gallons or less we're not affecting them with the water part. Councilwoman Baccus said, "Again I say if we're raising anything, at the end of the budget we should be having an idea whether we made money or loss money either way. It's a reasonable question". Mr. Payne said, "From an accounting standpoint I can't give you an answer because we're not at the end of the fiscal year; we've got a few more days left". Councilwoman Baccus said, "You should be able to give us an estimate whether we made or lost". Mr. Payne said, "No ma'am, a lot of adjustments have to be made at year end and then the auditors come in....Councilwoman Baccus said, "I told ya'll to hire a qualified city manager". Mr. Payne said, "There's no way to make an educated guess at this point". Councilman Gardner said, "Here's what we can do, we can look at the previous years and see how we've done from a revenue standpoint and a cost standpoint and we've never....we're always treading water; every year we're treading water. A couple years ago we went and did a bond for our stormwater, 150% of our revenues. You can't do that year after year and expect us not to be able to raise funds. If you're going to do a bond that's 150% of your storm water revenues then expect to raise revenues. If you don't you're being irresponsible. That's what our previous administration did. We've got to work to get out of the hole that we're in because of our previous administration. Councilwoman Baccus said, "When we were down to almost minimum to the edge, ya'll pushed to get a $400,000 loan to pave them streets. You weren't concerned about it then". Councilman Gardner said, "Because we actually funded that with revenues to pay for it. There's the difference there. We raised revenues through taxation to fund that bond". Councilwoman Reed said, "When we voted years ago to raise it we were in a dire situation. We had no choice but to raise it. What got us to where we are now is what we thought we were voting on. It did come out quite different because that administration or those folk felt we needed to do more to get us there. It was done, so we are very leery now, but I do know that we've got to do something. So, I want us here...what is this...where can we go councilmembers...we've outlined all of the things that we're upset about, but we know from our meeting over and over...we've got to do something. We cannot not do..." Mayor Boyd said, "And what we're doing right now is the minimum". Councilwoman Reed said, "And that's what I'm saying and that's why I'm seconding to move on if we don't have any more suggestions or solution as to how we can get out of this. We've got to do something. Councilman Nettles wanted them to reiterate the charges once gain. Councilman Gardner said, 'If ya'll are really worried about funds like this maybe we should take off the 60% for $60,000 and above. Councilman Nettles said, "I thought we would go to $40,000". Councilman Gardner said, I

thought so too. I don't know how we got up to $60,000. Councilwoman Reed said, "I don't know how we got up to $60,000 but you know.... Mayor Boyd said, "Some people were asking that everybody get a little something so that's why he put that in there. We try to put it in that first responders get more so we put it in that way, so everybody is getting touched. Councilman Gardner said, "Yeah but as much as I care about my first responders, I care about my street department". Mayor Boyd said, "Well, we do too. We care about them all but...Ms. Lathan said, "So this will affect over 80% of all the residents Darlington". Mayor Boyd said, "Public comments are over at this point". Ms. Lathan said, "Mayor we really didn't have a public hearing and so that should be duly noted. Mayor Boyd said, "Yes we did". Ms. Lathan said, "You can not call a public hearing and conduct a public hearing in three minutes. Mayor Boyd said, "there are not public comments right now". Councilman Nettles said, I understand that we need to do it. I understand we need to raise the funds but I'm just not comfortable with it.
"Councilwoman Baccus asked is this going to be implemented? How does our system work as far as billing the citizens? Is the system set up now where there's a rate set that we use monthly to bill them by? How are we going to add the flat rate to it"? Mr. Payne asked Mr. Shugart to explain how the system will work with the new rates. Mr. Shugart said our billing software will kick in after 5,000 and we'll just add these surcharges. Mr. Shugart said, "We're talking about 200 customers out of 3,300. We're not going to affect 90% of our customers. Mr. Payne said we're talking 622 customers out of 3,052. (Mr. Shugart & Mr. Payne are both talking at the same time) Mr. Shugart said 80% of the people living in Darlington won't see an increase at all in the water & sewer. Councilwoman Baccus said, "Again, that wasn't the question. I was trying to understand how the system works, that's what I asked you. How is it going to be implemented"? Mr. Shugart said, "The meters are read through a tower link". Mayor Boyd said, "What she's asking Mr. Shugart...she's asking before normally it's a percentage ...I think you stated a while ago the system will automatically kick in at 5,001 gallons, the surcharge is added on". Mr. Shugart said, "Our meter reading system is computerized so the meter readings go to a third party or generated by a computer and the bills are created by them at 5,000 gallons. The increase will go on those people's bills which are 600 out of 3,000 and something. 20% of our customers will see an increase and 80% of the customers will see no increase. Mayor Boyd said, "That's all she wanted to know". **Councilman Howard Nettles and Councilwoman Sheila Baccus voted no to the motion.**

SECOND READING ON ORDINANCE 2022-06 TAX ANTICIPATION NOTE (TAN)

Councilman John Milling made a motion to approve Second Reading on Ordinance 2022-06 Tax Anticipation Note (TAN). Councilman Bryant Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons Nettles, Baccus, Reed, Segars and Mayor Boyd all approved the motion.

SECOND READING ON ORDINANCE 2022-08 TAX LEVY (MILLAGE RATE 129.9793)

Councilman Bryant Gardner made a motion to approve Second Reading on Ordinance 2022-08 Tax Levy with a millage of 129.9793 mills. Councilman Howard Nettles seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Reed, Milling, Segars and Mayor Boyd all approved the motion.

BUDGET ADJUSTMENT REQUEST

.Mr. Payne said there are three wall heating and air units in the police department that need to be replaced. The total cost to replace the three units is $6,462.00. Mr. Payne said there are funds in 580-220 (utilities) which has about $14,000 left there but he needs to transfer this to 580-381 (furniture & fixtures). Mr. Payne said the total is $6,462 and I'm just asking to move money from money line item to another. **Councilman John Milling made a motion to transfer $6,462.00 from line item 580-220 to line item 580-381 to purchase three wall heating & air units for the police department. Councilman Howard Nettles seconded the motion. Councilpersons Reed, Baccus, Gardner, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT POOL – JOHN PAYNE, CITY MANAGER

Mr. Payne said after looking at the bank statement for the H-tax fund he was astonished to see the bank is paying us only .001% which amounted to about $1,600 a year. I asked Ms. Pridgen to provide the other bank statements for the other accounts that had significant funds in it. I started looking around to get a better rate of return. Mayor Boyd asked Mr. Payne to explain to everybody what he meant by .001%. Mayor Boyd asked, "If I had $1,000 in the bank it's going to give me how much money"? Mr. Payne said .001% will give you $1.00. Mr. Payne said the spreadsheet he provided has five accounts totaling almost $4 million. Currently we're getting paid about .001% on all of them. One pays 0.15% and the other pays 0.05% and on that $4 million our estimated annual return is about $4,272. He said he knew that there was a better way, so he started looking around at different vehicles for investments. He said he called around and to a lot of banks and investment houses and I contacted our auditor because I wanted to make sure anything that I looked at would pass his muster. The auditors strongly suggested that I contact the state treasurer's office and this local government investment fund. This investment fund has $10 billion in it and currently 40 counties, 97 municipalities, 71 school districts, 65 special purpose districts, 12 disability and special needs and 8 Council of government participate in this. These funds are dependent upon what the federal reserve does. Mr. Payne said in March the federal reserve went up 25 basis points. In May they went up 50 points; two weeks ago, they went up 75 basis points. Right now, this treasury fund is paying 1.5% which is 15 times what we're getting now. This is very short-term money. When I say short term that's generally six months or less; generally, three months on a lot of the ultra-short term. I suspect by the end of the year this 1.5% could be close to 2%. We already have one account in this fund that has close to $16,000 so I thought why not put our money in there and get a better rate of return. Just using these calculations, we could go from about $4,300 a year to about $59,000 in return. These are considered very, very, low risk; they are invested in U.S. treasuries, U.S. federal agencies, investment grade high grade, short term corporate bond paper. Also, this is very liquid and if we need money I can get it back in 24 hours. By the way we're going, we are letting the bank take our money and make a lot of money. I think the citizens of Darlington ought to make this money. Mr. Payne said in order to do this I simply have to have council's consent. Councilman Milling asked, "The information about how the investments is doing is readily available to you each and every day so if you see a downturn you can act quickly and take care of it"? Mr. Payne said, "Yes, everyday". Mr. Payne said they have two options: one is a fixed rate which we are in a rising interest rate environment. Now is not the time to be fixing a rate because in three months it could be higher, and we could lose

out. This is a floating rate. Again, if something happens and we need these funds I can have it back in 24 hours. **Councilman John Milling made a motion that we make this investment in the South Carolina state treasurer and the local government investment pool. Councilman Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons Nettles, Baccus, Reed, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion**.

REMINDER

Tuesday July 12, 2022 - Regular Monthly Meeting of Darlington City Council, 6:00 PM

ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Nettles made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:44 PM. councilman Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Reed, Milling, Segars and Mayor Ward voted to adjourn the meeting.

_____, Mayor

ATTEST:

Gloria B. Ridgeway

Clerk & Treasurer