CITY OF DARLINGTON
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
HELD IN THE COURTROOM/COUNCIL CHAMBERS
400 PEARL STREET, DARLINGTON, SC
TUESDAY, MAY 23, 2023 – 6:00 PM

Present: Mayor Boyd, City Manager John Payne, Councilpersons Bryant Gardner, Elaine Reed, John Segars, and Sheila Baccus. Also, present: Ms. Merry Morgan, Ms. Gloria Hines, Street & Sanitation Superintendent Alex Gainey, Police Chief Jimmy Davis, Ms. Anna DeWitt, CPA Kimberly Vinson and several others not known by name.

Councilmen John Milling and Howard Nettles were not present at the meeting.

Mayor Boyd called the meeting to order.

Invocation was led by Mayor Curtis Boyd followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Councilwoman Elaine Reed made a motion to approve the meeting agenda for tonight's special council meeting on Tuesday May 23, 2023. Councilman Bryant Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

OLD BUSINESS

2nd Reading Ordinance 2023-03, S.C. Local Revenue Service Program, John Payne, City Manager – Mr. Payne said we had 1st reading at our regular meeting. He said this is a program that the City is already involved in with the Municipal Association where they collect funds for us. Mr. Payne said the General Assembly changed the law regarding local revenue services and the Municipal Association has changed the organization. He said this codifies our new relationship with theirs. **Councilman Bryant Gardner made a motion to approve 2nd Reading on Ordinance 2023-03, S.C. Local Revenue Service Program. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

NEW BUSINESS

Purchase of Police Department Computer Server – Chief Jimmy Davis - Mr. Payne said he would speak for Chief Davis because he is having oral surgery tomorrow and it may be difficult for him to do a lot of talking. Mr. Payne said he was advised that around 2018 the police department bought a new computer server, and it has since worn out and has passed its capacity. Right now, they are working on a temporary server. He said they put bids out and they got three. The lowest bid was from ATG (Asset Technology Group) for $20,520. He said the other two bids from VM2 & ETC Technology Solutions were higher. Mr. Payne made a recommendation to accept the low bid from ATG (Asset Technology Group) for $20,520.

Councilman Bryant Gardner made a motion to accept the low bid of $20,520 from ATG (Asset Technology Group) for the police department computer server. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

SCDPS Grant to Purchase police laptops – Chief Jimmy Davis Mr. Payne said before Chief Washington left he applied for a grant to buy 6 laptops for our officers, and we received it. The grant award was $27,000. The winning bid for the laptops came from ATG which had the lowest bid of $25,853.26. Mr. Payne said, "You do not have to vote on this. The Department of Public Safety has already approved it, I'm just bringing it to your attention. He said the grant is paying for all of the laptops and the accessories and there is no cost to the city. Mr. Payne said, "They have already approved it. You don't need to vote; I'm just letting you know".

Purchase of Used Vehicle for the Police Department – Chief Jimmy Davis – Chief Davis said, "Right now, the narcotics division of investigations, they are borrowing/using a vehicle from the investigations side. They have seized money and money that has been signed over to the police department that can only be spent on combatting drugs. The narcotics team is requesting to purchase a used vehicle for the narcotics division. Chief Davis said after purchasing this vehicle for $33,939 and an estimated cost under $4,000 to upfit it with blue lights will not zero out this account, but they will still have some money left in it. Mr. Payne said they asked four car dealers for quotes. Chief Davis said they had some dealers that never responded, and they had some that sent in quotes for a newer car for a higher price. **Councilman Bryant Gardner made a motion to approve $33,939 to purchase a police vehicle. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion**.

Review of Estimated Revenues FY 2023-2024 – Kimberly Vinson and John Payne, City Manager – Mr. Payne said, "What I would like to do tonight is go over the projected revenues. He said these will change because as you see at your desk Alex will be here a little later with the roll carts and commercial and private….we're going to propose a small increase in fees on that so these revenues will change depending on which direction you give me. Mr. Payne said we've been working with Kimberly Vinson for several years where she comes in periodically and helps Gloria with the monthly accounting, and she helps with the audit, and she helps us with the budget as well. Mr. Payne said we've been working together, and we've come up with projected revenues at this point. He told the council rather than going down each line if they have any questions they will be glad to discuss them. Mr. Payne said our budget does not ask for any millage increase, and it does not ask for any water and sewer increase. He said at this time our projected revenues are $8,380,470. Councilman Gardner asked if there was anything on the revenue side that's unexpected that they should know about….increases or shortfalls"? Kimberly Vinson said, "You're going to have an increase due to new business and from that projected increase that we received from the county we are recommending that we hold back a bit of that. She said you will see in the "move to reserve fund" because the amount of money that we're going to be getting within the first couple of years is not going to be the same amount that we're going to get 7 or 8 years from now, it's going to drop. So, we're want to hold that back

in reserve and not get used to budgeting that high so I would say that amount is unexpected. Councilman Gardner asked what the amount is. Mr. Payne said the primary driver of that would be line item 4395 - fee in lieu of taxes. That's the Georgia Pacific money that has now kicked in Mr. Payne said the amount that's on the spreadsheet that was originally done several years ago will never be exact to the penny because it depends on their depreciation but it's pretty close. Mr. Payne said the fee in lieu of schedule starts out high the first couple of years and then it comes down a little lower. It averages about $419,000 a year but we don't want the city getting used to $500,000 a year and then it drops down a bit and then you've got to scramble around and make all kinds of adjustments. Mr. Payne said there's no action required now. Mr. Payne said, As I mentioned a moment ago, there's no millage increase this year; there is no water and sewer increase, but our cost keeps going up in sanitation and Alex is going to explain what we face there. He said we are giving you options and what we're looking for right now is just direction. He said they are going to give them the option of 3 1/2% increase, 4% or 6%.

ALEX GAINEY - STREET & SANITATION DEPARTMENT

Mr. Gainey said when he was going through his budget and looking at expenditures he noticed there were areas that there were areas we overspent on. He said most of them are for the expenses for the trucks. Alex said most of his trucks are anywhere from 15-17 years old. He said the trucks are getting age on them and they are being driven every day. He said they are spending a good amount of money to keep these trucks on the road. We can't afford new ones, so we've got to do what we have to do to try and keep them running. Mr. Gainey said it's to the point now if you have a failure on one of the trucks….a couple of times we spent somewhere in the upper teens to $20,000 to get the truck fixed and back on the road and I don't see that getting any better for the next couple of years until we buy new trucks. Mr. Gainey said we are going to have expenses like that because of the age of the trucks and how much they are driven. He said a lot of municipalities have spare trucks, but we don't have spare trucks. He said one thing we've got to look at is we know back in 2020, I think it was…whenever we put the commercial garbage out for bid. CWS (Capital Waste Services) won the bid and one thing they did was they held our rates, our current rates we were paying at the time; they held those rates for six months then they went up after six months. Mr. Gainey said they didn't go up on us in year two; they held the rates where they were at. For year three, which is this year coming up, they are going up 2 ½% each year up to year five - (It's a 5-year contract). He said in the past, that line item is where we bought roll carts from and there's no way if we don't do an increase….it's going to cost us to offer the dumpster service to the businesses. Mr. Gainey said, "I've said it a million times before, if we are going to offer a service we shouldn't go in the hole offering a service. He said we knew we were going to….I know we're going to have to…we don't have to if we want to go in the hole we cannot go up but we're going to have to go up on the dumpsters. He said if we go up on the dumpsters that's going to cover the cost of our dumpsters and roll carts but we're still going to be in the hole if we keep our numbers where they were last year. Mr. Gainey said the only way we can do that and not be in the red (will probably still be in red a little) is by doing rate increases. Mr. Gainey said he talked to Mr. Payne, and he said he really didn't want to do rate increases but when you look at it….I've got it broken down and I guess you all have it. Mr. Payne said a 3 1/2% rate increase, a 4% rate increase, and a 6% rate increase. That's pretty much an increase on all of our fees across the board so it'd be sanitation,

storm water and our commercial dumpsters. He told the council the spreadsheet breaks everything down at 3 1/2%, 4%, and 6%. He said when you look at it per residence…right now we're charging $35 per can for street and sanitation charges. That's not stormwater. He said if you go with 6% it will cost $37.10, that's $25 a year is what it's going to cost a resident broken out over a 12-month period. Mr. Gainey said, If we are going to continue to offer services we can't go in the red. Mr. Gainey said I recommend that we do the 6% rate increase. He said no more than it's going to cost per resident to me that's the best way to go. As for the commercial, right now we are charging $55 if you go up 6% it will increase it to $58.30 per cart. Recycling for commercial would from go from $35 to $37.10 and stormwater broken out into different tiers would go….residential would go from $10 to $10.60 so it's not a major increase. Just looking at residential, if you did 6% across the board it would cost the resident $2.70 more a month than what they are paying now. Mr. Gainey said, "Personally I don't think that's that big of a hit per residence but that's a decision you all will have to make. Councilman Segars asked, "Alex if you go to 6% would that probably eliminate an increase for next year"? Mr. Gainey said it all depends on how things continue to go up. I'm not going to say it will eliminate it. Mr. Gainey said, "To be honest with you, you really ought to go up 5% or 6% just about every year to be able to keep up with….Mr. Payne said CWS is going to go up 2 ½% regardless. He said the 6% covers that, but we don't know what the maintenance expense is going to be with fuel and everything else. (Some of the council members had a discussion among themselves) Mr. Payne told the mayor and council that he's just looking for guidance. He said he will have to go back in and change the revenue numbers assuming that you are in favor of any increase. Councilman Gardner said if we are going to be doing this yearly, then back off that 6%, but Elaine and I…she talked me into it. I'm comfortable with 6%. Councilman Gardner asked Mayor Boyd if he was comfortable with 6% and he said yes. Mayor Boyd told Councilman Segars there's not going to be an increase on water or sewer. Mr. Payne told council if they are good with 6%, he'll go back and readjust the revenues and bring it to them at a later time. Mayor Boyd asked, "If we say 6% tonight, we're not locked into that"? Mr. Payne said, "You're not locked in, but I just need to adjust the numbers".

Executive Session: Pursuant to SC Code of Laws 30-4-40 (5) for a proposed contractual arrangement incidental to the purchase of property council may act following executive session.

Councilman Gardner made a motion to go into executive session at 6:36 pm. Councilwoman Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Back in Session

Councilman Gardner made a motion to approve the purchase of a few buildings in downtown Darlington from MCTX, LLX for $30,000. The buildings are on Exchange Street. The address numbers are as follows 102, 104, 106, 108, 110, 112, 114 & 116 Exchange Street for $30,000 Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Reminder
Tuesday June 6 2023, Regular City Council Meeting at 6:00 pm.

Adjourn
Councilwoman Reed made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 pm. Councilman Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the adjournment.

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Mayor

ATTEST:

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Clerk & Treasurer