**CITY OF DARLINGTON**
**BUDGET WORK SESSION**
**HELD IN THE COURTROOM/COUNCIL CHAMBERS**
**400 PEARL STREET, DARLINGTON, SC**
**TUESDAY MAY 28, 2024 – 6:00 PM**

Present: Mayor Curtis Boyd, Interim City Manager Mr. Bill Taylor, Councilpersons Milling, McRavin, Baccus, Reed, Gardner & Segars. Also present at the meeting was Johnathan Boatwright, Mr. Charles Shugart, Ms. Merry Morgan Smith, Mr. Hunter Thomas, Mrs. Melissa Altman, and Pastor Andy Williams.

Prayer: Pastor Andy Williams

Pledge of Allegiance

**Municipal Court – Melissa Altman**

Melissa said the city does not currently have a public defender to appoint to defendants when they come in for court and they ask for an attorney. She said she is working to get a contract with the public defender's office here in Darlington. She is asking for a second computer screen.

**Planning / Communications – Ms. Merry Morgan Smith & Mr. Hunter Thomas**

Ms. Merry Morgan said neither she nor Hunter has a city vehicle, so she added $500 for her travel expense line item. She increased the telephone expense line item because that would be for herself and the person that would get hired as the Program Manager. The $40,000 line item is to do the economic development work with the Main Street program and whatever needs to be done with economic development planning. This will include all the programs and subscriptions for the business development software that they will use and also the organizational software that's necessary for Main Street. That also includes joining National Main Street and South Carolina Main Street. She said she is asking for a $5,000 match that she can use for a Historic Preservation Grant. Her employee training line item is $6,000 because that will be for two people. The person that would be hired as a Program Manager for Main Street is required to go to all of the South Carolina Main Street meetings during the year which are quarterly. They are also required to go to the national conference. Ms. Merry Morgan said she added $3,000 for a new line item that needs to be created for board and commission training. That gives $500 for each of the boards to get supplemental training. She increased the trimming/planting tree line item to $15,000. She said the extensions did not print after line item 273 because it should be 273.1, 273.2 & 273.3. Ms. Merry Morgan said they are required to spend $12 per capita for our Tree City USA designation. She transferred the $10,000 from line item 273.2 & $8,000 from line item 273.3 to Hunter's department since he will be handling that. Ms. Merry said she added a new line item for $5,000 for work at the Carnegie Library to work towards getting that prepared to house the historic preservation program, the walking tours, the Main Street Program, and all the planning enabled bodies.

**Communications - Mr. Hunter Thomas**

Hunter went over his marketing budget. This will be an entirely new department.
Hunter said line item 210 for printing and office supplies is $7,000 and this will be for a double sided one sheet piece of paper that will promote events and other important information to all the citizens in the utility bill. The line item for $42,000 will be for all the events they are going to have. They are going to have at least up to four events with one of them being a major event. Hunter said you also need to get bands a year in advance, so we might want to get a band before the next budget year. He said these events will be at the Square, but he will also have block parties, hopefully throughout the neighborhoods around the city. Hunter said it might be split up by ward or it might be at Mayo High School. He said the first event is coming up race week. The line item for $1,340 is for software so he can do graphic design and do video editing and digital assets as well. $6,000 is in the advertising line item to advertise the events, but there will be other things that they will need to advertise for as well. In line item 264- employee training, Hunter said he will go to one conference since he is new to city government to get training on FOIA requests. Line item 382 in the amount of $6,100 is for camera equipment and his tripod. He said it will also include microphones and everything we need to do in-house production and that way we don't have to contract anything out. Hunter said he plans to create recruiting videos for police and fire, interviewing council, interviewing people at events, etc. Hunter said this is not in his budget, but he is looking at getting a new website. He said he got a good quote for $5,000 a year. He said the only difference is, and he doesn't mind this, he will take full control of the website. He would keep it all updated himself instead of sending the information to someone to do it.

**Water, Sewer, Storm Water - Johnathan Boatwright**

Johnathan went over Department 914C. He said he added line items 227.2 & 227.3 to help them keep a count of what's going on with the lift stations and help them plan ahead with what they need. He increased line item 226-maintenance and service contracts to $12,000 because they have more generators. With the new lift stations coming up they have standby generators on Joe Louis & Allen Street. Mayor Boyd asked if line item 278-sewer line repair for $450,000 match money. Johnathan said, "Yes, sir." Mayor Boyd said we did a $2 million project on Broad Street and South Main Street, and we had to match the funds. Councilwoman Baccus said, "I want to understand what you're saying about these generators. What you're saying is there's temporary generators for Lee Street, Joe Louis, or whatever other street you mentioned. Johnathan said, "The new lift stations." He said Joe Louis has a new generator sitting on a stand in case the power goes out, then it fires up and keeps the pump station pumping. He said you have to have those serviced every three or six months, and there is a cost associated with that. A man from MTU will come out and service those. A Generac dealer will come and service the one at Allen Street. Councilwoman Baccus asked, "What is it costing us to run those temporary pumps? Jonathan said it depends on the size and he does not have a specific number. He said he can check into that and get that information back to her. He said it cost $144,000 last year to run those pumps. He said that's why he has listed in his capital outlay to purchase a new 6-inch pump. Councilwoman McRavin asked, "The company that you are renting the generators from if something goes wrong, they come and fix them and is that why we are keeping them so long because it's cheaper? Councilman Gardner said, "That's how it was explained to him in years past. He said we wore out their machines versus wearing out our

own." Councilwoman McRavin asked, "Would it be better for us to purchase it or is it better for them to leave a temporary pump and then when it goes down, they come and fix it or give us a new pump." Jonathan said with the new lift stations coming online we are about to bid for four more lift stations this coming Thursday. He said with all of those coming online, the need for temporary pumps will hopefully go away for quite a while. Councilwoman Baccus asked, "The lift station that's on the corner of King Edwards and Limit Street, when will that lift station be finished because that was a part of the grant for Allen Street lift station"? Johnathan said the Limit Street pump station was not in the grant to be replaced. There was some gravity sewer there to be replaced and that was what was in the grant. The actual lift station, as far as the pumps and controls, were not scheduled to be replaced, but we have the pumps, the controls …. There's a foundation issue right now but as soon as we get the foundation issue and as soon as they get that straight they can rebuild that pump station. Councilwoman Baccus said, "So, there was no purpose for us to get the Allen Street Grant because originally when we applied for that grant the purpose for that grant (I'm going down to the COG tomorrow to get a copy of the grant packet) because when we applied for that grant, the purpose of it was to fix that lift station and Allen Street. If that lift station is not pumping, Allen Street is irrelevant because everything on Farm Street pumps to that lift station that has this temporary pump. If that temporary pump stops pumping, raw sewage is backing up on Farm Street. That was the whole issue from day one. That is what that grant was totally for. It had nothing to do with using the money for nothing else. She said, "That's what we applied for that grant for. If you were telling me that lift station is not ready to be repaired using the grant today, then I want to know where the grant money went because anything other than that is not what that grant was for." Jonathan said, "I was not here then when that grant was acquired." Councilwoman Baccus said, "And neither was Shugart." She said that the grant was done in 2020 or something like that and they didn't get here until 2021. So, they had no idea what that old grant was all about, but that was the whole conversation. That is what DHEC said that City of Darlington had to fix, so I'm going down to the COG tomorrow and I am going to get a copy of the whole packet for the grant." Councilwoman Reed said, "The monies that you're doing is to address whatever the issue is; King Edward and Allen, they are connected as far as what you're doing? Councilwoman Reed said, "Like she's saying, the grant I am understanding they are connected to fix Farm Street, to fix the issue with the raw sewage … Farm Street and Limit Street or whatever, but it was mostly Farm Street. That lift station at King Edwards and Limit addressed that. But according to the grant that we got it was supposed to also address whatever issue with Allen Street. So, I'm saying now I just want to hear how you are dealing with that." Councilman Gardner said, "It sounds like there's some speculation. I think Ms. Baccus said that she was going to get the actual application and then at that point if it included the lift station then we can go from there. He said the money that was spent as far as you understand it was to move pipes in that side …. Johnathan said, put new manholes in right around Limit Street. Councilwoman Reed asked, "What monies are being used to get the lift stations running like it's supposed to be." Johnathan told her he can't get into the money situation of it, but he can check into that and get back to her. Councilwoman Baccus asked, "Johnathan are you managing the money or is someone else managing the money." Johnathan said, "Mr. Shugart is managing the money. He decides what is spent and where." Mr. Shugart said, "The South Main Street, Farm Street, Allen Street pump station was a project that we put together in 2022. It had nothing to do with the

Limit Street Pump Station. Mr. Shugart said you all applied for one in 2020 and I'd sure like to know where that money went and what y'all did with it. Mr. Shugart said, "We had to apply for the money. We had to hire a construction company and then we had to finish the project which is just being finished. Mr. Shugart said we had two projects that had the name Allen Street in it. The Allen Street Pump Station, the Farm Street Gravity Sewer and South Main Street were projects we put together in 2022. Mr. Shugart said, "We applied for that money through… that was a CDBG Ms. Elaine that you and I went out and did the canvassing for." He said if you all applied for something in 2020 prior to my arrival, I don't know where that money went, but we can tell you where every penny of the grant money that we applied for. It went to rebuilding part of the South Main Street gravity sewer, the gravity sewer on Farm Street and the Allen Street pump station. Mayor Boyd said, "You said there were two grants, one was for the pump and lift Station; What was the other one for? Mr. Shugart said, the other one was named the Old Florence Road Gravity Sewer/ Allen Street Force Main." Mayor Boyd asked. "What's left to be done to fix …. Mr. Shugart said, "In those two areas there's nothing left to be done. Mr. Shugart said, "The only thing I know of that's left to be done is the Limit Street pump station and I had put together a project for that in October 2021, but I was not allowed to buy those pumps because they said I had not followed the purchasing procedure. But since then, we cut that project down and we started buying parts and pieces and now we pretty much have everything to completely rebuild the Limit Street pump station. We found out now that there's a structural problem with the pad that the building sits on. Mr. Shugart said they bought the material to rebuild the building. They are going to tear the old structure down and build a metal building where you can stand up in it so they can actually work on anything that's inside.

Councilman Gardner said, "In the past we've let department heads run through their budgets and then we ask questions at the end to help the flow of things so we're not here all night. He asked if that was fine with the council. Councilwoman Baccus said, "If I have a question, I'm going to ask the question."

Johnathan continued going over his line items. He is asking for a Boom truck at a cost of $196,000. He said this is to purchase it brand new, but they don't necessarily have to buy a brand-new truck. Councilwoman Baccus asked about $100,000 in line item 380-vehicle purchase. Johnathan said that's for two new trucks that were ordered in February or March of last year but with the supply shortage … Councilwoman Baccus asked, "Why are we spending so much money on these trucks for work trucks"? Johnathan said these are state contract prices, but the straight-out price for these trucks will be about $65,000 for a brand-new truck. He said he was following the trend that was followed when he came here. He said he just assume buy a used truck with low miles. Councilwoman Baccus asked, "Didn't you all purchase a truck a couple of months ago"? Jonathan said yes ma'am. Councilwoman Baccus asked how many more trucks do you all need? Johnathan said, "All of our trucks, except two, need replacement. Councilwoman Baccus said, "If we are buying work trucks, I don't see why we need to spend $50,000 on a work truck". Johnathan said, "From here on out, we will buy used vehicles." Johnathan said before I got here, I think you guys were purchasing a brand-new truck every year, so I was following the trend with that. Johnathan said the city needs a small mini track hoe for smaller leaks and projects -meter leaks, and leaks in the street. He budgeted $95,000 for

this. Johnathan said the track hoe we have now is oversized and it's hard to transport. They need a compact machine, a small dump trailer to put it in and a truck to pull it with. Councilwoman Baccus asked about $50,000 in line item 265-Professional services. Johnathan said this is for some of the work being done at the treatment plant. Councilman Milling wanted to know what happens to the funds if they are not spent during the fiscal year. Johnathan included $750,000 to purchase pipe bursting equipment and possibly hire a crew and hire two or three temporary guys and start doing these things ourselves. He said if they could do this themselves it would make things so much better, and they can start replacing all the aging gravity sewers. In department 912 Johnathan increased his salary line item to $500,000 and $100,000 for temporary employees. In line item 226 maintenance and service contracts he budgeted $75,000 for fuel for the generators and bypass pumps. Line item 288.1 is a new line item. He said you all just approved Southern Corrosion for a tank maintenance program so it will go in this line item. Another new line item is 233.1 for locating equipment they are looking to purchase. Another new line item is 231.2 small engine repair. Johnathan included capital budget requests as follows: replace filter media at four water treatment plants in the amount of $500,000; Purchase a mini excavator gooseneck dump trailer, F450 dually in the amount of $175,000. Councilwoman Baccus asked Johnathan why he put the mini excavator in this department when he already had it in 914C. Johnathan said, "To double my chances of getting it, I reckon" $175,000 was included in the budget for 589 W. Broad Street water and sewer shop repairs and upgrades; HydraStop Inserta-Valve machine and training $75,000; meter replacement $300,000. Johnathan went over the budget for stormwater. He said in the past storm water didn't have a budget so next year, I'm going to get a rough draft and create a budget for Stormwater. Councilman Gardner asked, "Have we been cleaning out our stormwater basins on a regular basis to catch some of our problem areas making sure they are clean from debris. Have we kept up that process"? Jonathan said, "Probably not as stringent as we had before, but we have hit problem areas. He said we haven't done as much as we had been, but the truck has been down for about six weeks. He said the people in Sumter had had time to diagnose what was going on with it and they called him today and said they had it figured out. He said when the truck comes back, they are going to get back on that. Councilman Milling asked, "Is it storm water that runs behind St. James from Wells Street? Jonathan said, "Yes sir. Councilman Milling asked, "If that is taking care of this area in the $135,000 that he shows on page 4 of his budget report and Jonathan said yes. Councilwoman Baccus said, "I totaled up small hand tools from all three of your sheets and it comes to $23,000. What kind of small hand tools are we purchasing? Johnathan said, we have more people than we've ever had, and each man has his own set of tools. He said all those tools run on batteries, and the batteries cost $100 apiece". Councilwoman Baccus asked will your department or street and sanitation department be using the vac truck to clean out the storm drains. Jonathan said we will be using it for storm drains. Councilwoman Baccus said, "The problem over on Jessamine Street and Hickory floods every time it rains because those storm drains are backed up. She said between Jessamine Street and Chestnut Street that line has a tree there and I think the tree is in that line. Jonathan said it is my understanding that the storm drain line between those two streets is on private property or something along those lines. Councilwoman Baccus said, "No you were talking about Chestnut and Reid. She said at Jessamine and Dargan Streets, the strip from Travis's sister's house to Chestnut Street - right in the middle of that is a storm drain that had a tree growing in it and

that's why all of that water is sitting there on that side". Johnathan said, "When the truck gets back, we'll go over there and check it." Councilwoman Reed asked, "When you're fixing stuff and seeing where these things … do we or are we outlining a system as to how these systems are connected. Johnathan said the storm water map is a little harder to come by than the sewer map. He said they have maps of some areas and some they don't. Councilman Reed said, "The area that they are outlining maybe twenty years or more ago, they were shown these storm drains that are in people's yards in the back of their houses. She said on Reid Street in the back of their home and on Chestnut Street in the back of their home" Councilman Milling said, "They did some strange things years ago. He said he was talking to a man who lives on Ervin Street, and he was having a problem with his water, and he found out that his waterline goes through the backyard of his next-door neighbor to get out to Hampton Street." Mr. Shugart said, "Ms. Baccus' issue and the issue you just brought up is one of the biggest problems I have. those easements for that were obtained years ago and it was maybe done with a handshake or a nod, but they weren't recorded at the courthouse so because they're not recorded at the courthouse and it's not public property, we really can't work on those. Councilman Milling said, "You're going to have to go back and see if they are willing to give easements." Mr. Shugart said, "It's a lot more complicated than just saying they are going to give an easement. We're going to have to hire a surveyor and get a qualified map of it and then we'll have to have an attorney draw up the easement then it will have to be recorded in the courthouse, and all the property owners will have to sign." Mr. Shugart said it wouldn't be something that he would be able to get just like that. It will take a while to get them. Councilwoman Baccus said, "The one on Reid Street is not that issue because that drain from Chestnut to Reid only runs from one person's yard. Councilwoman Baccus said she has been complaining about that problem for the last 20 years". Mr. Shugart said, "Well, she should sign an easement." Councilwoman Baccus said, "Nobody asked her. If somebody had asked her, she would.

Mr. Bill said, "Gloria and I will be meeting with Kimberly to go over final numbers and we should be able to have something in place. We are going to pass the first reading of the budget on June 4th. We will schedule the public hearing and the final reading of the budget for June 18th. He said if you all want to meet on June 11th and go over it one last time we will have some final numbers at that time.

**REMINDERS**

June 4, 2024, Regular City Council Meeting, 6PM
June 11, 2024, Budget Meeting at 10AM
June 18, 2024, Public Hearing & Final Reading of 2024-2025 Budget, 6PM

MASC Annual Meeting will be July 18 – 21 at the Hyatt Regency in Greenville, SC. If you plan to attend, please bring your registration form to us no later than Friday June 14th.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion of Councilman Bryant Gardner, seconded by Councilwoman Elaine Reed, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM. All approved the motion to adjourn.

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Mayor

ATTEST:

Clerk & Treasurer