CITY OF DARLINGTON
400 PEARL STREET, DARLINGTON, SC.
PUBLIC HEARING & SPECIAL MEETING
TUESDAY JUNE 25, 2024, AT 6:00 PM

Present at the meeting: Mayor Curtis Boyd, Interim City manager, Bill Taylor, Bryant Gardner, John Milling, Angela, McRavin, John Segars, Elaine Reed, and Sheila Baccus.
Also present was Sheila Jones, Hunter Thomas and Shawn Odom

INVOCATION: Mayor Curtis Boyd

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
Mayor Boyd opened the public hearing on the 2024–2025 Annual Budget.

(No one was present to speak at the public hearing, so the hearing was closed)
Councilwoman Elaine Reed made a motion to close the Public Hearing on the 2024-2025 Annual Budget at 6:02 PM. Councilman Bryant Gardner seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion.

For Council Action:

Second Reading of Ordinance
Ordinance Number 2024–07: An Ordinance to Make Appropriations for Ordinary Municipal Purposes for The City of Darlington For The Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2024, And Ending June 30, 2025; To Provide For The Expenditures Thereof, And To Provide For Revenues For The Payment Thereof, As Amended.

Councilwoman Reed asked about department 590- Planning and Development. She said, “I thought we discussed this about the Carnegie Library, that we weren’t considering it at this time”. Councilwoman McRavin asked, Does the salaries on that include a second employee? Mr. Taylor said, “Yes. If you recall, that is for the main street manager”. Councilman Milling asked about item 265-professional services and what type of services those might be. Mr. Bill said I know a lot has been with conversations with the attorney and the folks that were developing the master plan. Councilman Milling then asked about the downtown master lease where we have $22,000 budgeted. He asked are we getting anywhere because there was a dispute with that downtown master lease group, and we hadn’t gotten an update on it probably in six months or more. I told him I’m not sure I haven’t seen anything. I said I thought you all said you were going to get Kevin to check into that because nobody really knew about that downtown master plan lease. Councilman Milling said, “I guess we can put it in there and if it’s not something appropriate to pay then we won’t pay it”. Councilwoman Reed asked about the Carnegie Library. She said, “Actually I don’t see why we need to keep $5,000 in there and we said it shouldn’t be used right now”. Mr. Bill said my understanding was they were going to try and get some better accessible entryways to the library so that it could possibly be used and

evaluate the electrical and plumbing as far as restrooms in there. Sheila Jones said the building doesn't have bathrooms. There are two bathrooms in the basement, and both have been completely gutted. And so, they are certainly not accessible bathrooms because handicap would not be able to get to the basement so we would have to create new bathrooms on the main level that are ADA compliant. Sheila said she was looking through the code book for accessibility, and we would have to install a chair lift and increase the door size. Sheila told the council some of the other things that would need to be done. Councilwoman McRavin said, "All of this sounds costly, it sounds like it's going to cost more than $5,000. She said it sounds like we need to create a plan for this and that this is something that we would have to take on at some other time. Councilwoman Reed said, "Carnegie Library is just one of the areas where we are not focusing our interest right now because we've got more pressing issues". Sheila Jones said, "I think it's likely that she's trying to do it in baby steps so she'll get plans this fiscal year so will have an idea … she said because if we don't get plans, if we can't get somebody in there to decide where it's going to be, how we're going to do it, then we won't be able to know next year. Because we would have to use those plans in order to get bids. And in order to get bids so that next fiscal year we would be able to know what we need to allocate for the Carnegie Library. Councilwoman Reed continued to discuss the $5,000 in the budget for the library. Councilman Milling said, "One of the things that Mr. Bill just said a moment ago was, that if we have an item - we've got a balanced budget right now, if we have an item that we are curious about that we may not want it to be there, that we can doing the course of this fiscal year, and correct me if I'm wrong, we can do a budget amendment". Mr. Bill said, "And typically you would just modify the line item saying this amount of money is going to be changed to this. Mr. Bill said that's why I've always encouraged you to have a mid-year budget review maybe after January so you can see how the revenues are coming in to support the expenditures that we have. Mayor Boyd said, what we're asking for right this moment …let's just kinda lay the cards on the table. If we agree to this tomorrow, July 1, that $5,000 can go and be spent without our approval of whatever …The library needs something done to it. It's been sitting there 35 to 37 years or more, but right this second, we're robbing Peter to pay Paul, it looks like. So, what we're asking for is what is the $5,000 going to be used for. Mayor Boyd said my next question is the recreation Department. He's trying to figure out why it went from $176 for payroll down to $149. He said we are taking money out of the budget for temps out of all three departments for the street and sanitation, garage. He said all of those temps have been cooked and they're on the skeleton crew now trying to work. He said, there's $5,000 here, there's $50,000 plus dollars for a main street person to go down there and work. I don't know, I just don't understand. Mayor Boyd questioned $3,000 for board training, $6,000 for employee training in the planning department. He said to me those are things that could be cut instead of cutting personnel out of these other departments, so those are my concerns. Streets and all those guys are struggling over there. You've got one mechanic: you're killing him over there. Mayor Boyd said all three of those got cut in temp services. Mr. Bill said we were spending over $100,000 and temp service alone. Mayor Boyd asked, "Are we going to hire employees to replace those temps"? Mr. Bill said, "I think in evaluating the budget understanding over the last three or four years we've been overestimating revenues and we've had kind of deficit spending. My comment was I'm only here as an interim basis, but I didn't want to do that. I wanted to have a balanced budget. And we've asked each department to come back with some recommended cuts, just 2 1/2% to 3% at the

minimum. And outside of that with your increase in the millage rate, we will still be almost $250,000-$275,000 short, so outside of the recommended cuts that the folks brought back to us we had to go back and do some of the cutting. Mayor Boyd said, “I understand that, but our question is, and again, we’re nickel and diming it seems like. He said the Carnegie library has sat there for 37 years; it can sit there for another year. The boards haven’t been trained for years, that's $3,000 more dollars. Mayor Boyd said, “I’d rather they all have permanent workers that are paid well. So, I don’t want temps, but I want to make sure that there are employees here to do the work. So, what else can we cut that we don’t really have to have is what I’m asking”. Councilwoman McRavin asked about the recreation department and did anyone actually talk to the county about where these concession funds are going. Mr. Bill said I had two meetings with the county administrator and Lee, the Recreation Director. He said, my original conversation was regarding when Gloria and I sat down and started looking at the budget and looking at personnel and why we are hiring six or seven recreation employees, and we don’t oversee them. And they are on our insurance, they’re on our retirement, and so if they have an accident or injury, it goes back against ours and we have no oversight. So, the way that it’s set up according to Charles and Lee it was set up years ago is different than the way it’s set up in Hartsville, but Charles ‘s thing is that he doesn’t want the county recreation employees or supervisors, basically designating or supervising them as far as their pay and discipline. So, we’ve got to come up with a better solution. Mr. Bill said Mr. Charles Stewart said they cannot change the budget right now because it’s already set. Mr. Bill said it’s worthy of a conversation after probably February before we start our new budget year next year to see if there’s any other method that we can go through. We’ve talked about procurement, making sure that they are purchasing and following procurement standards. As far as concessions are concerned, I think you’ve heard that before they are not doing the concessions now, they’re doing the food trucks. Mr. Bill said, “So, they are not having to buy the concessions like they were, but they are trying to guarantee at least $200 per event. Councilwoman McRavin said, “Well when they utilize those food trucks we were asking where those funds go”. I told them when the recreation department turns the money in, some of the money is turned in as registration and some is turned in as concessions. Council continued to discuss the concessions in the recreation department, the reduction in their salary line item, the amount paid for building insurance, new people for the splash pad, several line items in the recreation department budget that lists athletic equipment. Mayor Boyd said the recreation department’s payroll is the only one that has changed (I later found out and told Curtis that the reduction in their payroll was due to us not having to pay the 5-7 people that worked the concessions). Several conversations are going on at the same time. Councilwoman McRavin asked about athletic equipment being in two different line items for two different amounts. Mayor Boyd asked the difference between 750 for registration. I told him the 750 account is supposed to be the account that’s only for the registration money that they bring in. In the past the way we used to do it was actually “a wash”. What they brought in in the registration funds they were allowed to spend that in the 750 account. But when the administration changed, the recreation director at that time came in and asked if they could change it and have it just like a regular part of the budget. So, it was changed at that time and made a part of our budget. We would actually keep up with the money that they turned in and they could spend no more than what was in that account. The council continued to discuss the recreation department line items, mainly athletic equipment. Mr. Bill

said if you want us to add a particular dollar amount to whatever category let us know but be aware that we are going to have to take it away from somewhere else. I think you all brought funds forward or got it from fund balance at some point in order to balance the budget in the past. We'd like to have a balanced budget going forward. Mayor Boyd said, “To me, my understanding of the budget is that when we walk out and Sheila is sitting here in the room right now and according to this piece of paper, when we walk out I should be able to walk up to Sheila and say Sheila you got $27,000 to spend to tear buildings down, which I thought was supposed to be $50,000, but we’re going to cut her to $27,000 now”. He said we’ve cut paving from $60,000-$20,000. It’s $40,000 of paving and so is going to start hurting the streets not getting paved. Mayor Boyd asked Mr. Bill if he had a number or example on the second page where it says revenue. He asked what numbers you were saying were inflated are you deflating them now are you saying. (Another conversation is going on) Mr. Bill said I can’t remember exactly what Kimberly was saying. Mr. Bill asked me, and we both thought it was the sanitation fees. Mayor Boyd said the revenues on page 2 the proposed revenue and the estimated revenue numbers are almost identical. He said, so my question is what revenue was inflated because what we are proposing that we’re going to bring in is pretty much identical to what we did bring in this year. He said, so I don’t see where something has been inflated. Councilwoman McRavin said, if I’m understanding you correctly, what you were saying is the budget last year, we are over budget right now. Mayor Boyd said, “The exact words were, that I heard, was the last few years that the revenue was inflated. Saying that we were bringing in more than what we were, but it’s not showing that. Mr. Bill said this is from our accountant saying that we overestimated the revenue when compared to the expenses. Councilman Milling said, “We won’t know how much money we bought in by June 30th until we have it audited, is that correct? But it looks like we have overestimated, and we will not be collecting $8.9 million. Mayor Boyd continued to ask about the revenues. Councilwoman McRavin said the water and sewer fund summary on page one shows a $221,000 deficit. Councilman Milling asked were there overestimates only in the water and sewer or do we have overestimates in the streets and sanitation as well. Mr. Bill said, “I think some of it was on the sanitation fees and the way the amounts that we were being billed versus what we were actually collecting. Councilman Milling asked was that a problem with our collection procedures that we weren’t collecting what we were entitled to Mr. Bill said, “One of the things we have to do is …. What we really need to do is audit the actual number of rollouts that are out there because I don’t know if we are accurately building the customers correctly. He said that is one thing that we talked about with Lucas. Councilman Segars said, I think we looked at that a couple of years ago and saw that we were off. We had some containers out there that were getting dumped, but we weren’t doing it for them. Mayor Boyd said we caught that about three years ago when there were containers that we were paying for that weren’t even being dumped the customer had left the building and the container was there. We had three or four containers that we were charging less than what the container cost the city. Councilman Segars they’re supposedly we got that straightened out. Mayor Boyd said my other question is on municipal court line item 265 professional services. He said this is where they are talking about having to have a public defender. We’ve never done that before. Are we required to have to do that now? Mr. Bill said if somebody comes in there and as for a public defender, we’re supposed to provide one. Councilman Milling said, “The right to counsel extends to Municipal Court just like it does to circuit Court. He said we just have not

been advising people and we haven't been doing it and there could be some questions about convictions that occur if people don't have the right to exercise an attorney. He said you can waive your right to an attorney, but I think in the past we have just as a city, have just ignored the mandate that everybody's entitled to counsel. Councilman Milling said should everybody ask for it I don't think the $15,000 is going to be enough but this is again one of those unfunded mandates that the legislature imposes. Mr. Bill said we've worked out an arrangement I think, for a per case basis versus an annual fee which we were opposed to. Councilwoman Baccus asked about the increase in the line item for small hand tools. Mr. Bill said that was a recommendation from the department that they needed these tools. Councilwoman Baccus asked, do we inventory our purchasing of tools and repetition of the same tools. Mr. Bill said we are requiring that they inventory everything now. We've talked to the auditors, and they really pushed for that apparently over the last two years and were not satisfied last year. The council went over line items for auto operating expenses, uniforms, special contracts, engineering costs, professional services. The council asked questions related to the water and sewer department which needed to be answered by the superintendent, who was not present at the meeting. The council continued a lengthy discussion on the budget. After much discussion of the budget. (Several members talking at the same time) **Councilman Milling called for the motion. Councilman Milling said, my motion that I had already made was to approve the budget as it has been presented to us in its form as it stands now without at this time trying to make adjustments in it.** The mayor asked without moving any items and I said yes, without moving any items. **That motion has been seconded by Mr. Segars. Councilpersons McRavin, Baccus, Reed, Gardner voted in favor of the motion. Mayor Boyd said, this is me being non-cooperative. So, for the public records, please make sure it is noted that Mayor Boyd voted no for the budget because I do not agree with not moving the stuff I do not agree with. I do not agree with rushing through it. There are items in here that need to be shifted and changed now I feel like I don't agree with the revenue that is on here. I think each department should be analyzed more strictly to make sure that each department is bringing in as much revenue as possible.** Otherwise, we are going to be in trouble as we move forward. And make sure that everyone understands that when you voted tonight you voted to raise the taxes also. Mayor Boyd said, "I don't have no problem raising water bills, sewer bills, taxes, and all that stuff, but we've got to look at additional ways to bring additional revenue in to make that sure each department is bringing in as much possible as they can. And the council is doing what they can, and the mayor is doing what he can to bring as much revenue into the City of Darlington so that we don't have to worry about where the money is coming from. **Councilman Milling said, let the record also show that we can moan and groan about things that we don't like, but we are obligated to have a budget or either of these people that work for us have no money. I mean I'm just saying if we have a budget, we've fulfilled our obligations we maybe can do it better in the future, but we have to have a budget by June 30.** Councilwoman Baccus said we could have made changes tonight and still had a budget. Councilman Milling said, "And we can still make changes. We have got a budget that we can work off of and we can make changes as it becomes necessary or appropriate".

The council started back discussing items that could have been cut tonight.

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE

ORDINANCE 2024-05 ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 18, ARTICLE XII- REGISTRATION AND REGULATION OF VACANT BUILDINGS - Sheila Jones.

Sheila said what you have in front of you is the same ordinance that was presented to you during the June council meeting. You all took it for information, and nothing was suggested to be changed. **Councilman John Milling made a motion to approve first reading of ordinance, 2024–05 and ordinance amending chapter 18 article XII**. **Registration and Regulation of Vacant Buildings. Councilman Bryant Gardner seconded the motion.** Councilwoman McRavin asked about section 18-279 where it talks about electrical service, wiring and outlets and then just below it, it said lighting you are required all exterior lighting fixtures must be maintained in good repair, and illumination must be provided to the building and walkways, but you said in the line above it, that they could terminate electrical services. Sheila said if it's there it needs to be to code. Sheila said if there are lighting fixtures then they must be maintained as it was when the building was there, and it had to be to code. If there are no lighting fixtures, or whatever lighting fixtures that are there are not maintained then you are going to either need to remove them or make them according to code. Councilman Milling said, "But all operating exterior lighting". Sheila said we can add that as Mr. Milling suggested. Councilman Milling said, "Or something to the effect that if no lighting, this does not apply if no electricity is being supplied to the building. **Councilpersons McRavin, Baccus, Reed, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Regarding Discussion of Negotiations Incident to Proposed Contractual Arrangements pursuant to S.C. Code 30-4-70 (A) (2).

Councilman Milling made a motion to go into executive session at 7:53 pm. Councilman Gardner seconded the motion. councilpersons, McRavin, Baccus Reed, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilman Milling made a motion to end the executive session at 8:14 pm. Councilman Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Baccus, Reed, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of ending the executive session.

Back in session.

Councilman Bryant Gardner made a motion to approve Beam and Hinge for $10,900 for the website Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, McRavin, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Bryant Gardner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 PM Councilwoman, Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, McRavin, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted to adjourn the meeting.

REMINDERS:
Thursday, July 4 city offices are closed for the holiday.
Tuesday, July 9 Regular City Council Meeting 6:00 PM
MASC Annual Meeting July 18 - 21, at the Hyatt Regency in Greenville, SC

_____ , Mayor

ATTEST:

_____
Clerk & Treasurer