CITY OF DARLINGTON
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING / WORK SESSION
HELD IN THE OLD COUNCIL CHAMBERS
400 PEARL STREET, DARLINGTON, SC
TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025 – 6:00 PM

Present: Mayor Boyd, City Manager Lenessa Hawkins, Councilpersons Sheila Baccus, Angela McRavin, Bryant Gardner, John Milling, John Segars. Councilwoman Reed arrived at 6:37 PM. Also present was Mrs. Lisa Bailey, Assistant Fire Chief Charles Bailey, Lucas Reed, Steve Abbott, Hunter Thomas, Jannie Lathan, Sheila Bryant, Lee Andrews, Police Chief Jimmy Davis, Mrs. Ruth Blocker from Disabilities and Special Needs Board.

Mayor Boyd called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.

Mayor Boyd led invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance.

COUNCIL WORKSHOP

Proclamation - Disability Awareness Month. City Manager Hawkins read the proclamation. She said in 1987 President Ronald Reagan established the Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month to highlight the importance of fostering a society where people with disabilities are empowered to contribute to their communities. The City of Darlington stands in partnership with the Darlington County Disabilities and Special Needs Board and is committed to creating accessible environments and productive opportunities year-round. Mayor Boyd on behalf of the Darlington City Council, and the City of Darlington recognize the services and commitment of The Darlington County Disabilities and Special Needs Board and proclaim March 2025 as Disabilities Awareness Month. Ms. Ruth Blocker thanked the council on behalf of the DSN Board. She gave a special thank you to the council members for allowing our consumers for over 20 years now you have allowed us to pick up trash along the roads of Darlington. She thanked the mayor and council for their support so that they could be productive citizens. Mayor Boyd asked if they were going to help this year, and she said we are just waiting for the council to start their contract. Their contract is from March 1st through November and we're just waiting for you all to say start and they are ready to work.

Ms. Hawkins said each department head will give an overview to the council and highlight changes to their budget. If there aren't any changes from the previous year, they don't need to go over that. Only if they are going to ask for something different. She said she is expecting department heads to take 15 minutes or less and if the council have questions, take about five minutes to do so. Ms. Hawkins said if it's more than 15 or 20 minutes, we can gather those questions and get back to you with the answers. Each department head passed out a copy of their proposed budget to councilmembers.

STREETS & SANITATION DEPARTMENT - LUCAS REED

Mr. Reed said, "**In department 630**, for the most part, my budget is running the same for the upcoming budget year. The only change he is proposing to his budget is an 8% increase in salaries and wages. Lucas said he is decreasing "line item 105-temp employees". He said he us decreasing 630-264 from $1,000 to $500; a decrease in line item 630-396 to $1,000; Add $1,000 to line item 630-381; increase line item 630-279 to $15,000; increase 630-388 to $50,000. Mayor Boyd asked Mr. Reed if he was getting all the money for the patching now. Mr. Reed said, "No." Mayor Boyd asked if there is still money in the water department for patching. Ms. Hawkins said, "I think there is some money set aside. She said what she would suggest is, if he knows it's going after a water or sewer project or job is completed, he can notate on the paperwork that this was for "water or sewer."

In the Sanitation Department-640, Mr. Reed is proposing an 8% increase in salaries and a $15,000 decrease in the line-item for temporary employees. Councilwoman Baccus asked, "If you eliminate the temp employees who's going to do the work"? Mr. Reed said, "Looking back at prior budgets, we actually got it before we were slotted for that amount of full-time employees. He said temp employees was something that was done during the intermediate administration. Councilwoman Baccus asked Mr. Reed if he's using the temp employees. He said, I am currently using them, but I'm looking to move them over to full time and no longer use the temp agency. Councilwoman Baccus said, "So, you're saying it's cheaper for us to move them to full time and pay insurance and all of these things. Mr. Reed said, "It's a 45% markup for temps". Councilwoman Baccus said, "That don't seem logical to me because you've got to pay taxes, retirement…. Ms. Hawkins said, "Mr. Reed and I are still in discussions about this. At this point, we are on track to pay more than $65,000 to the temp service between the three departments. However, to employ someone at a reasonable wage we wouldn't be able to do three people. So, we need to figure out what's the best way to go. Increase the line item for physicals because CDL drivers must take DOT physicals every two years. Mr. Reed continued to highlight his budget line items.

Mr. Reed said **Department 660-Garage** is pretty much the same.

Councilwoman McRavin asked Lucas if he had any intention of hiring additional employees. Lucas said we have a slot for twenty full-time employees, but we only have eighteen. Councilwoman McRavin asked Lucas if he would be utilizing the hotbox. Lucas said they have been using it a good bit lately. She wanted to know if it was just going to be used for service cuts done by the water department and if there are potholes that people call about, it will be used for that as well. Lucas said, both. Councilwoman McRavin asked about cherry picker. Councilman Milling asked Lucas if he developed a 5-year capital replacement plan. Lucas said he and Ms. Hawkins have been working on that. Councilwoman Baccus told Ms. Hawkins that everything Lucas is proposing to increase or decrease she wants to know actually how much was spent out of each line item in 2024. Ms. Hawkins said, "Actual through February."

FIRE DEPARTMENT - ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF CHARLES BAILEY

Assistant Chief Charles Bailey passed out a copy of the proposed budget for the fire department. Charles said they are proposing a 7% increase in salaries for firemen and volunteer firemen. Budget line item 610-217 – auto operating expense is over because they have an

aging fleet. Line item 221 for telephones shows an increase where they were paying ATG, but Charles said they were told to take it out of another account. Line item 227 for machinery & equipment, and line item 241-uniforms is being increased. Increase to line items 261 & 279. He is asking to add $1,200 to line item 382, which didn't have any funds previously budgeted. Asking for a $3,000 increase to line item 390. Charles Bailey said in his capital outlay they are asking for two new vehicles. They have a 1997 suburban and a 2006 avalanche that needs to be replaced. They are asking for two 2025 Tahoe or two 2026 Chevy Tahoe. Charles said they are asking for a new fire station. They have outgrown the one they are in and there's a lot of problems with it. A new fire station will cost approximately $3,500,000. Councilman Milling asked about other capital expenses for replacing fire trucks, etc. Charles said he doesn't know if Chief Cavanaugh sent them their five- or 10-year plan yet, but they are working on it. Gardner said, in line item 398 where it says $31,268 savings for paying off one of the fire trucks, I would say keep that on their account and have it built up on the side for future outlay. Milling said he agrees with Bryant that we need to continue to put some money aside. Councilwoman McRavin said, am I correct in my understanding that currently the fire station is not capable of housing a newer fire truck. Charles said, no ma'am, firetrucks are getting bigger and longer and if we were to buy a new fire truck right now, we wouldn't have any place to put it. Councilwoman Reed said, so what are we looking at? I know we talk about it all the time. Charles said we haven't nailed a spot down, but we have been talking to the manager about the location for a new fire station. Ms. Hawkins said it would take external funds, and Charles gave you $3.2 million but that is probably on the lowest end. She said in my mind you would do a public safety complex. She said I have talked to Chief Cavanaugh, Assistant Chief Bailey, Chief Davis, and Assistant Chief Cooke, and others about possibly getting a public safety complex that houses not only your fire department, but also your police department, codes enforcement and possibly have an EOC for emergency operations. Ms. Hawkins said there funds as of a report she read this week from Senator Graham 's office and Congressmen Frye where $3.2 million was given for a new fire station. At this time, we are not able to issue any debt so it would have to be from outside sources.

BUILDING & CODES DEPARTMENT BUDGET OVERVIEW - SHEILA MARIE

Mrs. Sheila Bryant said she is proposing a 10% increase in salaries. Mrs. Bryant said line items 210-Printing & office supplies, 261-Advertising, and 271-Speical Dept. Supplies are reduced. Line items 211-Postage & 214- membership dues are increased.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT BUDGET OVERVIEW - LEE ANDREWS

Mr. Andrews is asking for a 7 ½% increase in salaries. Lee said with the new complex coming online and everything else within the city he's going to need somebody to help with that aspect of it. Lee said he's proposing to hire two people. Line items 21-postage, 214-membership dues, & 217-auto operating expense increased. The utilities at some of the recreation facilities have increased and others have decreased. Lee increased line item 233 - painting supplies, line item 279-other operating expense has also increased. Lee said nothing changed in department 725-Williamson Park. Lee said nothing should change in the 750 account which is for registrations. He said that's the revenue account and right now we're sitting at $38,805 in revenue for registrations. He said that does not count the money for rentals. He said that is straight

registration money. Councilwoman Baccus asked, where does this money go? Lee said right now it goes into the general fund. He said we are going to need a new lawn mower; something that's going to cut a lot of grass every day. He said an industrial 72-inch mower with a 6-foot cut is $14,500 brand new. Lee said they have fixed some of the needs that we have had. They spent $670 on a golf cart that we inherited from the police department which has a dump on the back and the guys use it to pick up trash and run local stuff. All fundraiser money stays with the department, but I want to use it … if we do fundraisers for football, I want it to stay with football. If we do a fundraiser for baseball, I want it to stay with baseball. If we sell signs at the baseball field, it stays with the Little League, and not with the league. It stays there to add batting cages or equipment. Lee said, "All of the rental money for the building that's for rent or the ballfields, stay with the department to do upkeep on the buildings and do upkeep and repairs at the stadium. We are doing a grant now to try and do upgrades at Virgil Wells Stadium and we can take that money that rental money and use it as a match. Lee said, "None of our money rolls over yearly, so if I take in registration money on June 28th, at the end of the budget cycle it's gone. He said I would like to set up an account where we can roll this money over yearly. Lee said, "I don't know if that is possible for the city, but we do something like that for the county where the registration money and all of that goes into that." Councilwoman Reed asked, "So what has been happening with it before in the past"? Lee said, "I guess it just went into the general fund. It never came back to the recreation department." Mayor Boyd asked Lee if we are charging a different price for outside the city vs inside the city for registration? Lee said, "No." Lee said if that's something you all want to do … Mayor Boyd said, I think it should be. Councilwoman McRavin asked about a person for the splash pad. Councilman Milling asked Lee if he's working on a capital improvement plan. Lee said, "Yes. Councilwoman McRavin asked about the rental fees and Lee went over the pricing and the charge for security. McRavin asked, "What is beyond the salary? What does the county pay? Lee said, our salaries. He said there's four employees in Darlington. Lee said, we do have a county budget too but it's not near as much. He said we have about $15,000 for programs in the county budget. They have purchased some equipment they have purchased some programming stuff but it's not near …. I've worked in Hartsville. I've worked in the City of Florence; Florence County and I say this per capita Darlington puts more in recreation than anybody does. Councilwoman McRavin asked, where are the new employees going to be? Lee said, "It's my understanding that the lease agreement says Blue Street has to be held to a higher standard than it was prior to us remodeling." For that to happen, we've got to have somebody else. The three employees that we have are not going to be able to do the upkeep on that and keep it to the required standard. He said if we can't get two, if we can get one that concentrates on keeping Blue Street up will be good. Councilwoman McRavin asked, what about our splash pad because that is going to require someone as well. Lee said, we'll have to budget that in there too. Lee said we need to decide if we're going to have an attendant. If so, we'll have to budget for it. Councilwoman Baccus asked Lee to give an update on Blue Street so she can leave. Councilman Milling wanted to know what the registration fees are.

Ballfields Update-Lee said Duke Energy was at Blue Street today and we should have lights tomorrow. They have not done the inspections yet so the bathrooms can be used. They are finishing with the lights. They are finishing with Wi-Fi. The tennis courts are being sealed now.

Councilwoman Baccus left at 7:32 pm. Councilwoman McRavin brought up the water problem at the new ballfields. Lee said he's aware of the problem and he is going to talk to them about it. He said the drains are clogged up and if there's a drain there and we clear it, that water will run. McRavin asked if they submitted storm water plans to us. Lee said, with this being built through the school district, they didn't have to submit anything to Sheila. It's through the state. Mrs. Bryant said, "We know what the problem is so when it happens you can see where the drain should be but because it hasn't been maintained in so long its grown-up dirt has washed into it. It's likely that once it does get cleaned up that we need to put rip rap in it to keep it from overgrowing again. She said we are confident that there was either a pipe, but until we dig out each end of it and see where it is, then we will be able to address it. Lee said on the plans, it shows a pipe. Sheila said, "my assumption is going to be that because there is a road … if there's any encroachment for a driveway onto the road that driveway is going to have a pipe underneath it because there is a ditch there." The council continued a lengthy discussion about the ballfields.

UPDATES/DISCUSSION

Discussion of Incentives for Housing Development - Mayor Boyd

Mayor Boyd said Mrs. Bryant said we built six houses last year, but we need to try and come up with a plan whether we give it to them for a dollar or give it to them for free, inviting people to come into our city to build homes. The mayor said, not rental homes but permanent homes, that they will get their money back if they turn over to HUD showing that it's been sold as a residential house. Mayor Boyd said, I would encourage the council to try to see if between now and the next city Council meeting to come up with what you think and we kind of hash that out and see if we can start trying to propose something to encourage over the next few years to see if we can ….we've got thousands of houses built on the outskirts of Darlington into Florence for the new plant over there. There are houses being built by Nucor so we need to try to see if we can do something to increase our revenue and build houses in the City of Darlington over the next number of years. Councilman Milling asked if anybody knows what other communities may be doing for incentives. Councilman Gardner said you might want to reach out to Lake City because they have a big development going on over there right now. Councilwoman McRavin said, we left the important thing unattended, and that's the zoning ordinance. She said we can talk about incentives all day long, but if we don't pass the zoning ordinance, all of this is frugal. Mrs. Bryant said we are going to discuss that when …. Councilwoman McRavin said we were also supposed to discuss the tree ordinance. She said we need to get that established and completed so that the incentives will make sense.

Discussion of Outside City Utility Rates - Mayor Boyd

Mayor Boyd said we brought up about the bank and right now, they are inside the city limits, but once they finish building at their new site, they will be moving outside the city limits. The mayor said, "They are going to use our water and our sewer … anybody outside the city limits …when I say outside the city limits, if you ride down N. Main Street beside the mobile home park there's a house there in front of that that's in the county. Everything around it is in the city. He said anybody inside the county is being charged an additional fee. The mayor said Charles is

supposed to be getting that for them so they can look at it and see if the fee is doubled for out-of-city residents. The problem that we have is, it is now has happened with the Racetrack. Years back the racetrack was given sewer, and it was supposed to be annexed in, but now because it wasn't annexed, our property is just sitting over there beside the racetrack, and we can't annex that property in because we can't get to it without their permission. The liquor store that is sitting beside SPC Credit Union that's getting ready to be built… if they want to move into the city, we can't move them into the city because there's somebody blocking us. He said our city can't grow if we continue to allow people to purchase our water & sewer at a higher rate and don't bother to get them to annex into the city because we know that our police and fire departments wouldn't just sit on their hands if there's a robbery or a fire there. He said because they chose not to annex in, they should be required. Mayor Boyd said I talked with Mrs. Bryant today and the City Attorney is checking for him and is supposed to have it to him by tomorrow. …. Mrs. Bryant is saying that …. Correct me if I'm wrong Mrs. Bryant …we are pretty much the only one that she's ever seen that we've asked you to come into the city instead of saying, "ok, (just using SPC Credit Union as an example) if you want to use our water and sewer, you're going to have to be in the city. I think Council should decide what we want to do because over the years they have allowed ….and this has been years back, but the racetrack should have been annexed in. Councilmembers discussed donut annexation. Councilman Milling said if it's completely circled by city property, we can force annexation. Councilman Milling said, "But I'm with you. I wouldn't give water and sewer to somebody that's not in the city. Mayor Boyd said Kevin is checking to see what we can do. The council continued to discuss annexation and if the city should continue providing water, sewer, police, fire services without annexing into the city. Mayor Boyd said Charles Bailey said they are in our district, but I don't know if we have to provide them with water and sewer. He said I think the council should come strongly with that and say, this has got to stop. We're sitting here looking for money. Everywhere, all different things. How much money are we getting from Georgia Pacific? Millions. They are helping us build our ball fields, but yet Citi Trends is sitting out here and what are we getting from them? Nothing. But we have water all the way out there because our past ancestors put water lines out there. Councilman Gardner said, "Can you take what you have given would be my question. Mayor Boyd and Councilman Milling both said, I don't know that we could go back and say we're not going to provide what we have been providing, but it would be good if we could. Councilman Milling said, "I have been told that Burger King pays the highest hospitality tax of any of our fast-food restaurants, but they are on our water and sewer, but they aren't within the city limits. Mayor Boyd said maybe you can't change that, but the council can change that you're now going to pay a higher rate. The council discussed areas that are in the city and out of the city in the area rooms which are contiguous can possibly be annexed into the city. ***(Several council members are speaking at the same time. Can't hear what everyone is saying)***

FOOD NETWORK EVENT - CITY MANAGER HAWKINS & HUNTER THOMAS

Ms. Hawkins said we have an exciting event coming our way and conjunction with NASCAR at Darlington Raceway. The Food Network has contacted the City of Darlington and Hunter Thomas dealt with the executives that are working on the Great Food Truck Race, and they want to come here and host one of the last ones of their filming. Mr. Thomas said he learned today that they are trying to finalize some paperwork with Darlington Raceway. He said

everything is still sort of fluid until they start promoting it. Mr. Thomas said on March 31st they will be selling food to anyone who wants to come out that will be tentatively from 12 to 5 PM. He said on April 1st there will just be filming where they drop the keys and people are eliminated. Hunter said, “If you think about it, between the race and this, everyone’s from all around the world is going to be watching Darlington for a full week. Hunter asked the council, “Do we want to charge the food truck business licenses to come here”? Mayor Boyd said, “I would say not to for this event.” Councilman Milling asked, “How much would we lose if we don’t charge them”? Hunter said right now they have no idea how much they would make. Councilman Gardner asked, “Would they charge hospitality tax when they do that? Hunter said I’m not familiar with that. He said, “I know we are not paying them to come, and they are not paying us to come. Councilman Gardner asked, “Can you see if they charged a hospitality tax and if they are …. If other vendors normally are, I feel like they should. I can see us waiving the $50 fee for the business license, but if they charge a hospitality tax that could be good revenue for the city. The council continued to discuss whether the city should require them to pay the hospitality tax to the city. Hunter said there will be five large food trucks on the Square.

REVIEW OF MANNING CITY ORDINANCE LANGUAGE FOR INCLUSION IN DRAFT ORDINANCE Mrs. Sheila Bryant said, “There was discussion at one of the workshops for the zoning ordinance regarding agriculture and allowing chickens and such in R-10. She said there was some contention about that because we had just changed our ordinance to a very lengthy ordinance about farm animals. Mrs. Bryant said, Mr. Milling said to check Manning, and she did. She said Manning has a district called a development district and everything that gets annexed into the city goes directly into the development district. She said if we had the development district it would allow us, if somebody was a farmer, or has a ranch or whatever, to put them into the development district. It would not affect what they are currently doing. We would allow different things in that district and then at the time when they want to develop it or do something else with it then it can go in front of the planning commission, and then they can at that time do a designation. Mrs. Bryant said, “What Manning does is put everything that gets annexed into the city goes into this development district and once it is annexed then the zoning administrator puts together a package for the council and recommends what district it should be and then the council decides much like we do now”. Mrs. Bryant said, “I think that is an option that’s vital for us to take farm animals, and then everything else agricultural out of R-10, but when something gets annexed in it gives them a designation where they can still be able to keep and do the things that they are doing without compromising are becoming a non-conforming parcel of property in our town. The council had discussion about some of the areas that are and are not in the city. Mrs. Sheila Bryant said, that is something for you all as a council to consider. Mrs. Bryant said there are things that need to be discussed, and you all said you wanted to have another work session. She said we need to discuss mobile homes; we need to discuss the trees, and we need to discuss this.

Ms. Hawkins said we have been told that we will be losing one of the Dollar General stores. Ms. Hawkins said, “As we work to get the splash pad in, I want you all to think about crosswalks and walking paths up the street here and this cross street here because I imagine that children, once they find out about this place are going to want to come. Some children have free reign, and

they will be walking to get to the splash pad, so I want you all to consider crosswalks or either a bike path or some type of safety decal." Ms. Hawkins said the recreation department now has this sports app for your phone so that you can find out what's going on at the recreation department. The Mayor and Representative Williams are working on a way to revitalize the swimming pool on Gary Street. The recreation department has a QR that tells about events that are going on, etc.

EVENTS REMINDERS

Monday March 31, 2025, Darlington County Municipal Council Meeting Hosted by Hartsville City Council, Lawton Park, Hartsville, SC.
Tuesday April 1, 2025, Regular City Council Meeting, 6 PM.
Tuesday April 15, 2025, City Council Workshop Session, 6PM

ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Bryant Gardner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 PM. Councilman John Segars seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Milling, Reed, and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

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Mayor

ATTEST:

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Clerk & Treasurer