CITY OF DARLINGTON
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE COURTROOM
LOCATED AT
400 PEARL STREET, DARLINGTON, SC
TUESDAY OCTOBER 21, 2025 - AT 6:00 PM

PRESENT AT THE MEETING:
Mayor Curtis Boyd, City Manager Lenessa Hawkins, Councilpersons Shelia Baccus, Bryant Gardner, Elaine Reed, John Milling and John Segars. Also, present were Hunter Thomas, Sean Odom, Joyce Coe, Chief Jimmy Davis.

Councilwoman Angela McRavin was not present at the meeting – (Sickness in Family)

Mr. Stephan Drew with the News & Press was present.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Mayor Boyd.

Mayor Boyd did the invocation which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

New Business
Mayor Boyd said to give Mr. Gardner a moment. He said we'll just jump to number two and skip number one which is the sketch of Brunson Dargan Amphitheater property. Mayor Boyd said let's start with discussion of the outside water and sewer rates.

Discussion for Outside Water & Sewer Rates
Mayor Boyd said that he asked Ms. Hawkins to try to give us an estimated amount that if we raised it to 30% for the outside residents, not the city residents. The outside residents that are using the city water and sewer and the commercial water and sewer also, what would that project to be? Mayor Boyd said kind of comparing it from last month, so it will vary because everybody does not use the same amount every month, but this is just a variance. Mayor Boyd said "I think if you look at the first page, you're saying that it would go up for inside water residential, the total amount. Ms. Hawkins said no, it's outside. Ms. Hawkins said the inside is what Mr. Gardner asked to be placed on there. Councilwoman Reed asked do you have any other copies. Ms. Hawkins said you should have one at your seat. Councilman Gardner said I'm sorry guys where are we? Mayor Boyd said that we just jump to number 2. We will come back to number 1. Mayor Boyd said outside water rates increase as you say $15,575 if we do the 30% increases. Ms. Hawkins said on an annual basis. Mayor Boyd said that it would be an annual basis average. Councilwoman Reed said so where we are? Mayor Boyd said on this first page right here. Mayor Boyd said she did a comparison, correct me if I'm wrong, you did a comparison from last month. And if we increased it and everybody used the same amount that they used last month, then……. Ms. Hawkins said that when Mrs. Fulton put this together, she gave it to me, I just told her to select one billing cycle. And we will use that as our base. Ms. Hawkins said that's what we're using. Mayor Boyd said right so one cycle whether it was last

month or whatever, she did one cycle. Mayor Boyd said just multiply that by twelve and that cycle stayed the same, that rate would increase $15,570 per year. Ms. Hawkins said per year, yes. The second page is outside sewer would increase $2,068. Ms. Hawkins said yes. Mayor Boyd said then on the third page, outside water for commercial would increase $12,141 per year. Then outside sewer commercial would increase $22,700 per year. Ms. Hawkins said yes. Mayor Boyd said which would be a total of about fifty plus thousand dollars. Ms. Hawkins said estimated at $52,500. Councilwoman Reed said this total projected increase over here. Mayor Boyd said yes. Mayor Boyd said Mr. Milling asked one time about the tier rate increasing a little bit more. Mayor Boyd said did you include that or the same tier rate as the residents? Ms. Hawkins said same as the residents. Ms. Hawkins said that it's incremental, it's not per gallon, that's the other thing. It's per 1000 gallons is the tiered rate applied. So, that's why you see on the first page instead of it being 295,000 gallons it's only 295.582 because we have to divide it by 1,000. Ms. Hawkins said so it's really incremental. I could suggest something but 52,000 is not that bad or not necessarily that good but whatever you all, I mean, I don't know if there was a goal or an amount you were looking to go to. Councilman Gardner said right now my interest is just bringing it fairness to the city or to the county residents because the city residents are getting charged these tier rates and the county is not. Councilman Gardner said So that needs to be the number one goal. Councilman Gardner said Now whether we revisit it later to see if something more we should be doing then, and I got that. Now if you have an idea, I'd love to have it. But one thing I want to point out is the first 2,500 gallons, like with the city residents, is a flat rate. And so, all these tiered increases are after 2,500 gallons. Councilman Gardner said is that fair? Ms. Hawkins said no, that is not what I have been told. Ms. Hawkins said it is on the rate sheet. Mayor Boyd said it says 0 to 5,000 here. Councilman Gardner said it's 0 to 5,000, so with the city residents right now there is no tier on the first 2,500, that's not correct. Ms. Hawkins said it says 0 to 5,000 gallons. Councilman Gardner said the 0 to 25 is a flat rate though, right? Ms. Hawkins said I don't know anything about that. Councilman Gardner said because either we pass something different then what they're charging or that first 2,500 is a flat rate and then after that it's tiered. Ms. Hawkins said that are you mixing it up with these, is it a tap fee maybe? Councilman Gardner said no, the first 2,500 gallons should have been a flat rate because that's kind of your average user is how it was sold to us originally when it came to the city residents. And then after 2,500, that is when the tier kicks in. So, from 2,500 to 5,000 of a certain price and then after that I thought it tiered up. And the tier only happened at 2,500 plus. Mayor Boyd asked where she pulled this tier from. Ms. Hawkins said from your rate sheet. Mayor Boyd said so if it's the same tier then it's 0 to 5,000, we can check and see. Mayor Boyd said if the residents use more than 5,000, then it changes. Councilman Gardner said residents use more than 2,500 that's where the tier use to be, that's when I thought the tier kicked in the tiered rate. I thought it was a flat rate for the first 2500 gallons. Mayor Boyd said we'll look at that and see. Ms. Hawkins said, "Is that on water and sewer? Councilman Gardner said that would be my assumption. Councilman Gardner said I definitely know on water. Mayor Boyd said I think it would be the same. Councilman Gardner said I would assume so, but that's purely an assumption for that question. Mayor Boyd said that she pulled this from the tier season. Councilman Milling said sewer even a tiered system, or is it just based on water usage? Councilman Gardner said whatever you pull with water is what the charge you for sewer, but I can't answer anything now. Mayor Boyd said she can find out for us, but we didn't have a tier on

this, so she's pulled this tier rate from somewhere. Mayor Boyd said I think we need to go ahead with the full amount. It's not an astronomical difference. We went up on the trash for the commercial 30%. I think it's not going to be bad. Mayor Boyd said that it will help bring in additional funds for the water department. Councilman Gardner said I'm sorry for running in here late. We were at a meeting with the Attorney General earlier, just for my education, what can we tell what the average increase we're going to give to the county residents, just so we can have that on the record, or you can educate me? They all are talking at once. Mayor Boyd said she got it here $40.52. Councilman Gardner said where are you? Mayor Boyd said the top sheet $40.52, so go to $52.68. Councilman Gardner said there we go, thank you. Mayor Boyd said basically $12. ……. Mayor Boyd said sewer thirteen something. Mayor Boyd said I just want to bring that back up to make sure everybody's fine. If you're fine with staying there with it and then we can vote on it in the November meeting. Councilman Milling said does this make sense, I may have done the math wrong. It looks like on that first sheet we've got 102 customers under either way it looks like we are going to be making, I'm sorry I hadn't quite got my math right. It looks like if you just take that 15,575 divided by 102 and then divide it by twelve, you're going to have a rough increase of twelve and a half, thirteen dollars per customer on the water side. You can make that adjustment. Mayor Boyd asks him to say that one more time. Councilman Milling said I took the 15,575, divided it by the 102 and that came out to like 152 but that would be an annual charge. So, I divided it by twelve and it looks like it's around $12.75 more or less each month for each of the 102 customers. Councilman Gardner said I took the sewer, difference between the 30% minus the current and then I did the same for the water side and the sewer. I got a total number of $25.25. At 102 customers that's $2,575 a month. I multiplied that by twelve and got $30,906. I just subtracted the $5,268 minus $4,052. Then I went to the sewer side and did the exact same thing for $5,673 from the 4,364 that was $13.09. I added those together came to $25.25, as long as I didn't miss click on my calculator. I then multiplied that by 102 customers, which gave me 2,570. (inaudible) Ms. Hawkins said if you all are agreeable …. we would need to …. We have to have two readings and a public hearing. She said I did find out that we need to have a public hearing at least six days' notice. She said we can present it for first reading next month. Councilman Gardner said, That's close. Ms. Hawkins said, but not the public hearing, the public hearing will be before the second reading. She said you can do first reading and then six days later you can present a public hearing. She said I'll have to check our code on that and then in December we can do second reading. Ms. Hawkins asked Council when they wanted it to go into effect. Councilwoman Reed said January. Mayor Boyd said, January will be fine. That way we can give everybody notice.

Discussion of Brunson Dargan Amphitheater Property Mayor Boyd said we presented this a while back about trying to present some stuff to the school Board. Councilman Gardner said a few months ago we discussed the St. John's Amphitheater and Brunson Dargan property. You all authorized me to reach out to the school district and send out a letter of intent when they had their bids out. Some of the school board members have reached out and they are amenable to the idea they want us to have a plan and to present that plan. Councilman Gardner said he reached out to potential partners-private and non-profits and governmental sectors, and everyone has been incredibly positive Councilman Gardner said we now have to develop a plan. Charles at Darlington County has authorized the Darlington County Economic

Development Executive Director to run point for this since we currently don't have a city planner. Councilman Gardner said, I'd really like two things tonight; one is a conceptual drawing for the board. He said I reached out to Bill Eubanks who did our Masterplan Design, and he has agreed to help us with this section. this conceptual drawing will change it where the previous one we had on our master plan was all housing. What we're looking at is between 10 and 15 acres at the top where Brunson Dargan School used to be would be left open for developers to come in. He said he has one developer who's talking and looking at drawings to try and figure out if it's something he's interested in, he said the expected cost for this will be between $1,600 and $2,000. He said Bill Eubanks said it wouldn't cost over $2,000. He said this would just be a conceptual drawing and all I'm asking for tonight is if you all don't mind authorizing up to $2,000 to be spent on that contract with Bill Eubanks to redraw that area to include the aspects that we talked about in executive session. Councilman Milling asked if this was just for the Brunson Dargan site. Councilman Gardner said it will be Brunson Dargan, and the St. John's Amphitheater. Councilman Gardner said they have an incredible amount of partners - Ms. Shaw, Lee Andrews, Brian Gandy with the Historic Commission is in favor. Councilman Gardner said what he has been doing is going around in the community to try and figure out who wants what and the vision we have. Right now, we've done a really good job on the sports side of recreation and quality of life, but not everybody doesn't play sports. He said one of the visions is to have a simple track that has a playground in the middle of it. He said he talked with Kalmia Gardens Executive Director and part of their mission statement is to help out in the community so he will help out on the environmental side. Davis & Brown is interested in helping with the water, sewer, and the storm water side for free. He said Ms. Lindsay Privette at the COG said …this number I'm going to throw out will never spend one single dollar until council agrees on it. But we need to come up with a good vision, a concrete idea, present it to the school board, and if they are amenable, then we will bring it to council and we will get on exactly what we have an interest in doing. He thinks I should have an answer by the December meeting for the School Board on whether Coker College is going to be onboard and potentially NC State. Councilman Gardner said the second thing he wants to do is empower a committee and get some of these people who are interested in the project to come together in an official capacity. No dollars will be spent minus the $2,000 we approve tonight but we need to have a really good game plan of what we can do and what's feasible. If we were to spend the $800,000 that we have in the hospitality tax account, Ms. Privette at the COG said we would get between $4 million - $5 million dollars to match it. He said I'm not saying we spend all of the $800,000, but you also need to know that she said it will be more like a 3-to-5-year program. Councilman Gardner said if we do move forward with this, the School Board would like to see the plan. He said this is a list of people that are onboard and there's no question: Darlington County Economic Development will run this presentation and help with all materials gathered for this presentation. The COG will handle all grants; Jody Atkinson will provide all of the labor to install all of the electronics as long as we pay for the materials; Cecil Ridgill has agreed to all of the electrical engineering for free Davis and Brown are planning to help with site planning and whatever else I can help with at no cost or very little cost; DCI Metals has agreed to give us all the metal we use in this project for free; Palmetto Mining & Palmetto Concrete Company have agreed to help at some level but they would need to see the site plan to see what real cost would be involved if we have to move a lot of dirt; Ervin Engineering will do all the trail engineering and drawings for connecting

Williamson Park to this property for free; Darlington Historical Commission and Brian Gandy will tag team this presentation and help with all of the historic education; He said he has to firm up Clemson Extension but they've been amenable. He talked with the Forestry Commission this weekend and they are amenable to this project. Councilman Gardner said the only person we are really missing right now is a landscape designer and a landscaper. Councilman Milling said, "Hugh Dargan." Councilman Gardner said he met with the Green Infrastructure Center this past week and they are looking into this. St John's Alumni (not the alumni association but a group of private individuals) has expressed interest and they think they may just privately fund the amphitheater renovations. He has a roofing company that will put the roof on. Steve Smith is an architect in town and he's going to do all of our architectural renderings for free. Councilman Gardner said we have an incredible coalition of people who are getting behind this project. He said if you all don't mind empowering me to make a committee and get these people that I've mentioned into a committee so that they can all work together. Councilwoman Reed said, "One of my concerns would be this because this is city I don't feel like we're going to always be without an Economic Development Director and when we put such a massive project going in and have the County over it. Councilman Gardner said the County is not over anything. The county is only going to run points on the presentation. He said they (the school board) expressed that we would come to the meeting in December and present what we have planned. Councilwoman Reed said this will enhance the city, but I was also looking at the development side where we could continuously get taxed and I didn't hear that. Councilman Gardner said half the property will still be set aside for developing all the property that will be recreation is really floodplain; they can't develop there even if they wanted to. Instead of all the property being sold to a developer we're going to revitalize the lowlands and all the high ground will be stayed for development. Councilman Gardner said we have an opportunity right now and if we want it, we need to present and if we don't, we just need to back out. He said if we pull this off, I truly think we could change and transform our downtown. This is an incredible opportunity, and it appears the community is interested and they're going to put their dollars behind this as well. He said he hopes the school board is going to be approachable and amenable and if they are … if they give us a solid go forward then we'll probably need to spend $5,000 to get a true cost estimate. Councilman Milling attempted to make a motion but since we're in a work session, we cannot vote. Councilman Gardner asked Ms. Hawkins if she was fine with signing a contract with Bill Eubanks and she said, that's fine.

Mayor's Update

Mayor Boyd said on S. Main Street SC DOT is tidying that up. They are finishing up the sidewalks within the next week. He met with Georgia Pacific the other day and they have spent almost $200 million dollars on their upgrades. They are working on trying to fix the truck traffic flowing through B Avenue. He said they met over there with DOT, and I talked with the Senator today to see if we can get additional help with that. They are supposed to be done by May. They are getting ready to start demolition of the older buildings over there. Mayor said Councilman Gardner said he talked with the plant manager the other day about possibly helping with Wells Park that was in the Masterplan. Mayor Boyd said the city is working on the Christmas lights in Wells Park. Scare on the Square is next Thursday October 30th beginning at 4:00. Mayor Boyd asked the council as we move forward to try to be accurate with what we throw out to the public.

The other day this paper about our debt was given to everybody. I can read the numbers, but I don't know what all these issues are for.... for example, one says Pee Dee Electric Recreation … Well, when said when I handed this to the public, which was handed to the public in council meeting the other day… looking at that one, I know what it's for, but that's where we put the playground at Bowen Manor. Mayor said all these other things that are on there you can't really tell for sure what it is, so I took it to the accountant, and she said these numbers weren't correct because this was dated a year ago. I'm not sure of the reason why this was handed, but I would ask that as we go forward, things that are handed to council and especially to the public, that the council is given an opportunity to look at it before we do that. Ms. McRavin passed this out to everybody and she's not here to answer my question about why. He said Kim, the accountant, is supposed to try to get these numbers together with descriptions. Kim did say three of the debts have been paid off so this is not current, so it really shouldn't be passed out to the public. Mayor Boyd said I would ask that when we do that, that we get our numbers straight. He said like when we asked to vote to approve $5,000 for Christmas lights and then we're confronted with false information to the public that I want to clarify tonight. We did not spend $7,000 on Christmas lights at Wells Park. He said there is a $7,000 bill and we still haven't clarified what that bill was for, but it's more than likely for the light poles, but it says Christmas lights. Mayor Boyd said, "At Wells Park the City of Darlington council agreed last year to put approximately $17,000 on the lights. He said we had to pay a contractor to put power out there because a few years before that we had to run drop cords out there. Randomly, a number was thrown out there that we paid $10,000 for that which was incorrect. It was $4,820 that was paid to Jody Atkinson and not $10,000. He said the gravel out there was $800 and he had to pay our guys to help a little out there. He said it came to approximately $23,000 that we spent on the lights last year to get them up and going which we'll still be able to use this year. He said some people on council are throwing out $30,000, $40,000 and that's what the public hears, and I want to make sure the public knows and I'm asking council that as we move forward that we don't just randomly throw numbers out and that we have documentation to back what we're giving to the public. He said the light bill for that park for those two months was quickly thrown out to the public and the public now thinks we spent $7,000 on Christmas lights in that park. The Christmas lights ….and Ms. Pridgen can verify this…. I called Duke Energy and got Ms. Pridgen on the line with us and in October the light bill at Wells Park was $8.50; in November, the light bill was $210.10; in December, the light bill was $368.72; in January, the light bill was $18.50. So, for November & December we spent a total of $578.82, which is nowhere close to $7,000. Mayor Boyd said everyone on this council does a great job of trying to make sure that we do our best, but we all make mistakes. He said we do our best to be frugal with the money that the City of Darlington has. I wanted to make sure that was clarified. That was very incorrect, and numbers were thrown out to the public and I want to apologize for that and I'm not going to allow that anymore. Mayor Boyd said, "It was also thrown out that we can use Hospitality Tax to buy a trash truck, fix road, sewer. I talked with Charlie Barrineau today and we cannot use hospitality tax …. The city is not allowed to buy a trash truck with that or fix sewers and streets. If, as Charlie said, we were a hospitality city like Myrtle Beach for instance, you might be able to wiggle it around and possibly do something like that, but it would still be a really gray area. He said I'm sure we used part of the hospitality tax to fix a drain at the ballfields (when we did the ballfields) because there was a drain in the middle of the field. Something like that of that

nature, yes you can use it. I wanted to make sure that was clarified and clear. Mayor Boyd said I have asked for a copy of the budget for the past three months since June. He said I have asked for it in email and text a number of times and it still has not been sent. He said I voted “No” on the budget so I’m asking for a copy of the budget publicly. He said I have asked for a copy of the purchase order for the trash truck that threw the gentleman off the back of it. I asked for the purchase order, but still there was no reply. I have asked for updates on rental truck and haven’t gotten a reply. I have asked for updates on repairs of the trash trucks that we sent off and haven’t gotten a reply. Mayor Boyd said he also asked for an update on the Vacant Building Ordinance and hasn’t seen any progress nor received an update on that either. Mayor Boyd said as for an update on department heads for Codes Department, W&S Department, Sanitation Department and Economic & Planning Department. He said the only thing I’ve gotten on the Economic & Planning Department was that we’re not spending the money on that department so we’re saving it for a trash truck. I don’t know where we’re standing with the other departments. I have not gotten a reply. I asked for the sheet that we were supposed to do the public forum that we were not given the information on that. I’ve asked and texted and still no reply on what the budget was supposed to be discussed on the public forum. I would like to have all that information before we have another public forum. Mayor Boyd said if I can get some of these updates, I would greatly appreciate it then I can share that with the City of Darlington.

Councilwoman Reed said, “I do agree with you about public information. We should be careful about what we present to the public because …. It came to my attention that it was you (Mayor) that had put out the same things that you outlined here on Facebook. She said it had such a tone, like it was a personnel matter. Councilwoman Reed said it was also at another point about this budget thing and when our past city manager was chiming in. She said all of that is public information as we put to the public that shows that we, the council, are not working together. Councilwoman Reed said I wanted to make that point and I would ask us to definitely refrain from any Facebook postings about our council members.

Councilwoman Baccus said, “If we’re going to talk about information not being correctly put out, there’s a whole lot of information that goes out from this council that implies that we spent less than what we spent or we didn’t spend a total amount of this figure or that figure on splashpad, lot on 151 and several other things that we spent more money that is being implied to on Facebook and in our meetings. So, if we’re going to try and bash Nikki for putting out information that she gathered, that goes both ways because a lot of things that you all are saying in general is not true information. She said, second of all, that whole gripe session that I just heard a few minutes ago was seemingly to me was an attack on our city manager. That’s what that sounded like to me. You got up here, you got on Facebook, and you attacked her, griped, and complained and now you are coming out to the public and griping and complaining, simply to attack the city manager. Mayor Boyd said, “I’m just stating the facts.” Mayor Boyd said, “You should make sure that you speak clearly because you’re the one that throws all the numbers out about the ballfields. Councilwoman Baccus said, “And I look up everything.” Mayor Boyd said, “I’m asking the council if you are going to present a number have the documentation.

Councilman Gardner said previously we were figuring out how much can we borrow, and we were told that we don't have any borrowing capacity. I talked to the accountant, and she says we have at least $800,000 in borrowing capacity. Ms. Hawkins said that is our updated information, please tell the whole story. Councilman Gardner said so you were using figures from a couple of years ago. Ms. Hawkins said no if you will remember I emailed you all. Councilman Gardner said that I'm speaking. Ms. Hawkins said you asked me a question. Councilman Gardner said I did not ask you a question. Councilman Gardner said I said very clearly that we were in a session, and we were told we can't borrow any money. I think I assumed we were talking about the trash trucks, and the public was told that we had no borrowing capacity, zero. He said the problem was the numbers she was referencing were from two or three years ago. The number that is currently today is that we have over $800,000. Now, what I will ask of myself is when I come back to council next meeting, I will present figures, not from me, but figures from our accountant that actually shows the information that I'm referencing, and I think that's what we as a council need to do going forward. It is fine to present any kind of financial numbers we want for any political reasons we want. That is unfortunately the good and the bad of politics, but if we're going to present numbers in front of a live meeting, I think it would best if we have the information that is disseminated to everyone so that instead of saying that we spent $41,000 at Wells Park, for instance, that we show it, because she may be right. There may be all these small little fees, and those small fees add up to $41,000. That could be true but without us actually seeing anything in front of us that proves it from our treasurer, then that number is hearsay. He said that it wouldn't be admissible in court, for instance. Now when it comes to us moving forward, the mayor is correct. And so, I would just ask that council, we have all been hearing from all of our constituents that we have got to figure out how to work together. And part of that is, instead of throwing stuff out there, we need to gather accurate information and then if we want to bring it to the public, we bring it to the public. If we are asking and asking and asking and we can't get it, I think it's rightly so that the public needs to know it for transparency. But we have a lady right here, and if Ms. Gloria can't get the information, then our accountant can get the information, and it can be disseminated to all of us. Whenever we hired Ms. Hawkins, I had a very specific question. The only thing I requested of her was I said when one council person asks a question and you get that information, would you send it to all of council. It was the only subject I handled, because you all handled every other one of them. He said I have been in the minority, and I have been in the majority when it comes to the council over my 10 years. I was in the minority for my first four years. Don't forget, I have seen information used as power and we have got to stop doing that. Councilwoman Baccus said that's what you all do. Councilman Gardner said both sides of us have been on this equation. You all have had the majority. If you want to call it you all, and we have if you want to call it, we, but we have got to stop that. We are Darlington. If one of us has the information we all should have it. We should not hold information for power, me nor anyone else. Councilwoman Baccus said that's what y'all do all the time. Councilwoman Baccus said you came in here with that report, did you give us the information before you got here, no. Councilman Gardner said I gathered information and just presented it to you all. Mayor Boyd said, "Well, that's what I'm asking…everybody talking. Councilwoman Baccus said we did not get it before you got here. Councilman Gardner said you can raise your hand if you would like to speak madam. Ms. Hawkins said that she had a comment. Mayor Boyd told her to go ahead. Ms. Hawkins said the

information that I …. Let me speak up so you all can hear me. I did not create the debt information. I asked for the debt information each time. In fact, if you will go back and look at the emails that I sent you I copied you from our CPA what she said to back up that number of about $180,000. Okay, recently she came into the possession of updated information from the county which increased our assessed evaluation, which is where I started. I needed to know those numbers. And she is the one that has changed that number. The issue with your debt, as I said, she did not want us to issue any debt with only $180,000 remaining in our maximum amount that we could borrow. Ms. Hawkins said that her, the accountant, recommendation was not to even pay off what we could because the money was so cheap. She said anything that I have told you about the debt, I got it from our CPA. I'm not mixing up numbers to give you, okay. Now as far as you all knowing about the change, she asked me to wait and let her make sure because we have had some mix up with information coming from our intergovernmental partners. So, I did not say anything because she asked me not to. The only reason you knew, I guess, is because you all went in and talked to them when they were here on site working on the audit for 2025. So, there's nothing that I'm holding away from you. Now, as another point I would like to add, there's no labor in your number. There were many days and weeks that our folks labored to put those lights up last year. From what I was told, I was not here, it was up when I got here. So, you might want to consider that might be the differential is the labor. Many days, many different departments, day upon day to get them up. Councilwoman Baccus said and the rental of equipment. Ms. Hawkins said and rented equipment, yes. Councilman Gardner said when it comes to the accountant, I can't believe I'm acknowledging this in public because I have always wanted to protect the city. Councilman Gardner said the accountant asked me for the budget because she didn't have one. Why is the accountant asking a councilmember for what we voted on? He said I had to go to John Segars, I had to go to the mayor to make sure I had all of the information to get to her. That is why I was in that room and when I asked about the debt, she said the number is $800,000 and that the numbers you were quoted were old. Councilman Gardner said, "You brought us some valid points and I'm going to ask her about those, and I will report back at the next council meeting. He said if I am wrong, I will publicly admit it and I apologize if I am now, just in case I am. When it comes to the labor at Wells Park, you are correct, labor costs money. Ms. Hawkins said, "I was just offering you the differential. She said I'm not debating that. I was just saying if someone had a different number than you did maybe this is what they were adding in.

Councilwoman Reed said, "What I wanted to say, all this conversation, you see what it is, finally we are able to do it in a correct governmental way. These kinds of discussions. I definitely see the differences and if we could take this personal stuff out, we'll see. I just wanted to comment about the vacant business that you're looking for Ms. Hawkins to do. The policy that we set up for that…. We had several meetings where we had residents coming in that had vacant buildings, which had electricity, and they were using for storage, etc. We have a policy set that they were going by. I'm just commenting about it the way you over to me is that you were saying we needed something. That there hasn't been an update to it. It was voted. That we were not changing it that whatever that policy is so that people pay that. They registered and paid $100 and that was what it was going to be. That was why we had so many citizen comments about it that they didn't see the necessity when they had electricity on and things of

that sort. …. I didn't know that there was anything else that we were trying to do with it. That you're looking for our city manager to do. Mayor Boyd said, "I was asking for an update. Councilwoman Reed said, "On What? Mayor Boyd asked, "Has any fees been paid? Has it caused anybody to fix their house or building? My objective to this is, I'm supposed to give an update to the city, and I can't give an update a lot of times because the communication is not given back to me. Therefore, I am replying back to the city that I can't give you an update because …. Ms. Hawkins said you asked me Thursday, Sir. Mayor Boyd said, I asked you, ma'am, I asked you about …. you never replied. The only reply I got back was from Ms. Baccus, which was a negative racial slur. Councilwoman Baccus said. I haven't replied to anything. Mayor Boyd said I've got it on documentation. Mayor Boyd said about the trash trucks. I even told you the other day that you still hadn't replied back about a purchase order number. Ms. Hawkins said, that wouldn't have been required. It was an emergency; it could have been just done. It didn't need a purchase order from me. Mayor Boyd and Reed talking at the same time. Reed said, "The update that you are looking for is simply since you were riding around and saw there were vacant buildings you wanted to see if the department had sent out anything and you know we are without that since July. Mayor Boyd said, "I'm asking for updates so I can report it back to the public. The citizens are looking for updates on how our city is moving forward. I have asked for updates via emails, and I haven't gotten any replies back from emails. I have asked for a number of things, and I am asking the council tonight. Don't randomly throw numbers out. Mayor Boyd brought up again about the debt sheet that was passed out as well as amounts spent on various services and items. He said I'm asking the council, all of us, me and everybody is when we present to council or present to the public, present your numbers.

Councilwoman Baccus said, "And when that finishes it will not be $5,000 by the time you add labor, and by the time you add electricity it will be more than $5,000 on Wells Park Christmas lights. She said, secondly, if this council learns how to allow the city manager to do her job and stop interfering with her doing her job this council would operate better. Mayor Boyd said, "You are still insinuating stuff that you have no facts about. Mayor Boyd said to show us the facts. Councilwoman Baccus said, I can give you a perfect fact: when this council voted to sell that property on Highway 151 you ran out the next day and signed the contract. Our ordinance says the city manager is supposed to sign the contract. Mayor Boyd said, "I asked the city attorney, and he said I had the authority to go sign the contract. Councilwoman Baccus said, "The city manager is supposed to sign the contract but y'all won't let the city manager do her job. That's your problem, y'all keep running around doing the city manager's job instead of staying on the council job. She said that's another part of this council problem.

Reminders

1) Tuesday November 4, 2025, Election Day
2) Wednesday November 5, 2025, Regular City Council Meeting, 6:00 PM
3) Thursday November 6, 2025, Taste of Christmas sponsored by City Fire Police Departments 6:00 PM
4) Tuesday November 11, 2025, – Veteran's Day, City Offices will be Closed.

5) Thursday November 27, 2025, & Friday November 28, 2025 – Thanksgiving Holiday, City Offices will be Closed.

6) Tuesday December 2, 2025, Regular City Council Meeting, 6:00 PM

Adjournment

Upon motion of Councilman Milling seconded by Councilman Gardner, the meeting adjourned at 7:12 PM. All approved the motion to adjourn the meeting.

_____

Mayor

ATTEST:

_____

Clerk & Treasurer