

City Council Meeting
September 8, 2015
7:00 P.M.
City Hall

Council Members Present:

Mayor Michael J. Heitzler; Councilmember Jerry Tekac; Councilmember John McCants; Councilmember James (Kimo) Esarey; Councilmember Debra Green-Fletcher

Council Members Absent:

Mayor Pro Tem Mark A. Phillips; Councilmember Franklin Moore

Staff Present:

City Administrator Dennis C. Harmon; Assistant City Administrator Jake Broom; City Clerk Kelly J. Lovette; Police Chief Harvey Becker; Fire Chief Steve Chapman; Finance Director Ron Faretra; Director of Public Works Steve Price; Director of Recreation Gary Stuber; Director of Golf Operations Troy Sanders; Public Information Officer Frank Johnson; Director of Planning and Zoning Sarah Hanson

Staff Absent:

Invocation:

Councilmember Jerry Tekac

Pledge of Allegiance:

Mayor Heitzler

Press Present:

Guests Present:

I. Call to Order:

Mayor Heitzler called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. Comments from the Audience:

Mayor Heitzler introduced the City's new Assistant City Administrator, Jake Broom. Mayor Heitzler recognized the City's new Public Information Officer, Frank Johnson, who recently joined City staff.

III. Approval of Previous Minutes:

City Council Meeting – August 11, 2015

Councilmember Esarey made a motion to approve the minutes, as stated by Mayor Heitzler. Councilmember McCants seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

IV. Public Hearings:

Mayor Heitzler stated the first item under Public Hearings was to adopt a city budget and to raise revenue. He stated the 2016 Fiscal Year Budget was \$41,000,000. At this time, Mayor Heitzler reviewed key portions of the proposed budget by stating the following: the City would continue to provide excellent municipal services, which came at a cost; there are proposed modest rate increases in taxes and in the water fee by which City Council has agreed to increase millage by 5 mills, raising it to 45 mills, and would equate to \$40.00, more per year in taxes for a \$200,000, home. Mayor Heitzler provided examples of millage rates for other municipalities and stated North Charleston has a 102 millage rate, Charleston has an 82 millage rate and Summerville has a 62 millage rate. Mayor Heitzler continued by stating: there is a proposed 14% water rate increase, which means an increase of \$1.75, per month, for a monthly water bill that averaged \$15.00; there will be no

cost of living adjustment for City employees, as employees are paid based on a classification and compensation schedule in which they receive “Pay for Performance” increases; debt retirement for the new fire stations; the Sanitation Division will hire more staff for a new sanitation route that will be added; 8 new police vehicles will be added; and a big expense within the proposed budget and main reason for the tax increase was for the funding for the 12 additional fire fighters that is needed to be hired for Fire Station III, as 4 personnel will be on duty at Station III at all times.

Mayor Heitzler recognized Mr. Arenson who inquired what the percentage increase was between the 2015 and 2016 Fiscal Year Budgets. Councilmember Tekac stated the City’s proposed operating budget for 2016 is \$20,184,000, and in 2015 it was \$18,800,000. He stated this was a .6% increase in all funds combined. At this time, Mayor Heitzler read the title to the proposed Ordinance.

AN ORDINANCE TO RAISE REVENUE AND ADOPT A BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF GOOSE CREEK, SOUTH CAROLINA, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2016 AND ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2016
(Introduction and First Reading)

Councilmember Green-Fletcher made a motion to approve the proposed Ordinance, as stated by Mayor Heitzler. Councilmember Esarey seconded the motion. Mayor Heitzler inquired if there was any discussion.

Councilmember Tekac stated the projected water rate increase equated to \$400,000, in additional Water Revenue. He stated these funds would be used for the proposed improvements to the water lines and the new hydro-pillar. Mayor Heitzler stated City Council and City staff was being proactive with their planning by looking ahead 20 years and preparing for the City’s growth and providing sufficient water pressure throughout to its water customers. Councilmember Tekac stated the cost of the water system improvements was approximately \$8,000,000.

Hearing no further discussion, Mayor Heitzler called for the vote. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Mayor Heitzler stated the City was transferring a small piece of property to Weekley Homes in Carnes Crossroads. He stated this was an insignificant piece of property that cannot be used for anything by the City and they were giving it to Weekley Homes so they could square off one of their lots. Mr. Harmon stated it was a total of 3,500 square feet. Mayor Heitzler read the title to the proposed Ordinance.

AN ORDINANCE PURSUANT TO SECTION 5-7-40 OF THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA 1976, AS AMENDED, TO CONVEY PROPERTY (TMS#: 222-07-01-143) OF THE CITY OF GOOSE CREEK, SOUTH CAROLINA TO WEEKLEY HOMES, LLC (Introduction and First Reading)

Councilmember McCants made a motion to approve the proposed Ordinance, as stated by Mayor Heitzler. Councilmember Tekac seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

V. Department Reports:

Police Department – Mayor Heitzler recognized Mrs. Barbara Bates who stated there had been some discussion on Facebook regarding the camera on US Highway 52 (S Goose Creek Boulevard) and US Highway 176 (St. James Avenue/Red Bank Road) and she inquired who maintained the camera and what purpose it served. Chief Becker stated the camera did not pertain to the Goose Creek Police Department. Mayor Heitzler stated the City did not put up any cameras. He stated the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) sometimes places cameras at intersections to count vehicles and plan for highway improvements. Mayor Heitzler recognized Mr. Anthony Coleman who stated this was his third time living in Goose Creek. He stated the first time was in 1997, then again in 2002, and then again in 2013. He stated he was very happy with the City’s municipal services he receives. He stated he was active duty military and made a conscience effort to return to Goose Creek for his third and final tour so he could retire here.

Fire Department – Mayor Heitzler stated Chief Chapman had a big transition approaching with 2 new fire stations and a new fire truck arriving. Mayor Heitzler stated a woman at his last Town Meeting stated her husband was sick and kept

falling and the Fire Department came to her home 6 times and each time they were always professional and it felt like it was family coming to her home. Councilmember Esarey inquired about the status of the construction to both fire stations. Chief Chapman stated they were still slightly behind schedule but progressing nicely.

Department of Public Works (DPW) – Mayor Heitzler recognized Mr. Luther Steel who stated he was concerned about the City’s swimming pool. Mayor Heitzler stated this was the Recreation Department’s responsibility. Mr. Steel stated he would bring the topic back up under Mr. Stuber’s report. Mayor Heitzler stated this time of year required a huge amount of work to keep the roadways looking nice and credited Mr. Price’s department for keeping the City clean.

Administration Department & Municipal Court – Mayor Heitzler recognized Mr. Joel Arenson who inquired about the increase in the 2016 Fiscal Year Budget as compared to this year’s budget and where the other \$20,000,000, in operating funds would go that the Mayor had mentioned in the \$41,000,000, budget. Mr. Faretra stated the difference was made up of the Enterprise Funds (Golf, Recreation and Water) and a bunch of smaller funds. Mr. Arenson inquired how much was budgeted for the Reserve Fund and what these funds covered. Mr. Faretra stated the City did not budget for Reserve Fund in itself; however, if additional funds were needed the funds would be taken out of any excess fund balance. Councilmember Esarey thanked Mr. Faretra and his staff for completing the budget so efficiently. Mr. Faretra stated it was not just him, but other department managers provide a lot of input and Mrs. Michelle Soderberg spends several hours proofreading the proposed budget.

Recreation Department – Mayor Heitzler recognized Mr. Luther Steel who stated he knew the City’s Annual Swim Meet was handled well, but all of the other events at the City’s pool were not handled the same way. He stated he has picked up beer cans, cars parked on the grass and the ponds by the tennis courts are not maintained. He stated he was on the Crowfield Compliance Board. He inquired what the process was for special events and swim meets; and, he wanted to take the time to create a process to keep this area looking nice. Mr. Stuber stated the Recreation Department was in charge of the large annual swim meet, but the high schools were in control of their own swim meets. Mr. Stuber and Mr. Steel agreed to discuss the topic further after the meeting. Councilmember Esarey stated his grandson played t-ball this year and Felkel Field was immaculate.

Golf Department – Mayor Heitzler stated he has only heard great things about the City’s golf course.

Public Information Officer/Annexation Coordinator – Mr. Johnson reminded residents that the Giant Goose Creek Yard Sale was scheduled Saturday, September 26, 2015, and all the vendor spots were sold out. He stated the Fall Festival was scheduled Saturday October 10, 2015. He stated Mayor Heitzler’s History Lecture Series was scheduled to begin the first Thursday in October 2015. Mayor Heitzler stated there were 7 history lectures scheduled, one for each Thursday, from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., until November 12th, and the first topic was Carnes Crossroads.

Planning Department – There were no comments or questions.

VI. City Administrator’s Report:

Request to Purchase – Police Department (800 MHz Radios) – Mr. Harmon stated there was a request with supporting documentation from the Chief of Police to purchase 15 mobile and 2 handheld 800 MHz radios from Radio Communications of Charleston, Inc., Goose Creek, SC via State Contract in the total amount of \$59,639.55. He requested City Council’s consideration to approve the purchase.

Councilmember Tekac made a motion to approve the purchase of the 800MHz radios in the total amount of \$59,639.55, from Radio Communications of Charleston, Inc., as stated by Mr. Harmon. Councilmember Green-Fletcher seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Request to Purchase – Recreation Department (Vehicle Purchase) – Mr. Harmon stated there was a request with supporting documentation from the Recreation Director to purchase a 2016 Ford Explorer from Vic Bailey Ford, Inc., Spartanburg, SC, via State Contract in the total amount of \$25,155. He requested City Council’s consideration to approve the purchase.

Councilmember Esarey made a motion to approve the purchase of the 2015 Ford Explorer in the total amount of \$25,155, from Vic Bailey Ford, Inc., as stated by Mr. Harmon. Councilmember McCants seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Approval of Records Retention (City Clerk) – Mr. Harmon stated there was a request from the City Clerk to approve a Specific Records Retention Schedule prepared by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. He stated the schedule regarded Victim Advocate files with a retention schedule for destruction 3 years after the case is closed. He requested City Council’s approval of the retention schedule.

Councilmember McCants made a motion to approve the retention schedule, as stated by Mr. Harmon. Councilmember Green-Fletcher seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

VII. Mayor’s Report:

Improve Water System (#9 of the 2015 Goals and Objectives): Mayor Heitzler stated he previously discussed this topic under Public Hearings and there was no need to review it again.

VIII. Comments and Questions:

Mayor Heitzler recognized Mr. Reggie Ryan who thanked the members of City Council and the City’s department managers. He stated he has lived in various cities and states throughout, but the City of Goose Creek was run better than any City he has ever lived. Mayor Heitzler recognized Mr. Joel Arenson who stated when the Comprehensive Plan was developed there were discussions about the possibility the Century Aluminum property would be sold for development. He inquired if this was still a possibility. Mrs. Hanson stated she had not heard anything about Century Aluminum selling the property. Mayor Heitzler stated he hoped they did not leave because there were 500-600 people employed at the plant, and he hoped Santee Cooper and Century Aluminum could come to an understanding on the rates. He stated he heard from the previous Century Aluminum CEO there was a large aluminum plant in Saudi Arabia; therefore, he would not be surprised if the local plant closed. Mayor Heitzler recognized a gentleman in the audience who inquired when the home on Pineview Drive that had burned would be cleared. Mr. Price stated the property owners obtained a building permit to repair the home and as long as the permit was active the City would be suspending Code Enforcement activity. He stated he did not know when the permit expired, but there had been no repair activity on the home. Mayor Heitzler stated a few houses down from this property was the new sidewalk for the children who attend the Westview schools. Mayor Heitzler recognized Mr. Alan Wall, the chairman of the City Planning Commission. Mr. Wall inquired what the zoning was of the property being “given away” by the City and would the new owner need to change the zoning. Mayor Heitzler stated the zoning was residential and the zoning would not need to be changed. Mayor Heitzler recognized Mr. John Causey who stated one of the things making the City so special was the spirit of cooperation from all the department managers, City Administrator and City Council. He stated if this spirit did not exist with the citizens and the Homeowner Associations, it would be a totally different place. He stated there was a lot of activity occurring in Crowfield. He stated September 26, 2015, they were sponsoring a free car and bike show in Middleton Park. He stated their annual 5K run was scheduled for October 10, 2015, and proceeds would be going to the Callen Lacey Center for Children, and there were prizes for 1st thru 3rd place in both male and female categories.

IX. Adjournment:

Councilmember Esarey made a motion to adjourn. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

_____ Date: October 13, 2015
Kelly J. Lovette, MMC
City Clerk

A copy of this meeting's agenda was sent to the Post and Courier, The Goose Creek Gazette and The Hanahan & Goose Creek News; it was posted in City Hall 24 hours prior to the meeting.