

CITY OF THOMSON  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
January 14, 2010  
6:30PM City Hall

Present:

Kenneth Usry, Mayor  
Clifford Lunceford, Councilmember  
Alton Belton, Councilmember  
John Smalley, Councilmember  
Bernice Brown, Councilmember  
James Jones, Councilmember  
Don Powers, City Administrator  
Jimmy Plunkett, City Administrator  
Dianne Landers, City Clerk

Also Present:

Marion C. Ivey  
Kelley Ware  
Beverly Rabun  
Randy Black  
Ruth Smith  
Billy Hobbs, McD. Mirror  
Charles Wallace  
Chris Wallace  
Randy Gingery  
Alice Gingery  
Jimmy Williams  
Willie Myrick  
Donna Branch, WTHO  
Jill Herkel – H&H Sign Co.  
Valerie Marshall  
Bea Hart-Moss  
Shelia Harmon

Mayor Usry welcomed all to the Regular Council Meeting of January 14, 2010. The invocation was given by Councilmember James Jones, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag.

**MINUTES:**

Councilmember Belton moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Council meeting of December 10, 2009 and the Special Call meeting on December 21, 2009. Councilmember Lunceford seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Second Reading of Ordinance #543 – Amending Sunday Alcohol Sales:

This is the second reading of an Ordinance to amend Ordinance #499 to allow the Sale of Alcohol on Sunday. This ordinance mirrors action already taken by McDuffie County and passed by City voters in March 2009. This changes the ordinance to reflect what the voters passed.

Councilmember Belton moved for approval of this Ordinance. Councilmember Jones seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Approval of Architect Contract for TEE Grant – Thomson Depot:

Surber Barber Choate & Hertlein Architects were approved at the December 2009 meeting for the Depot project. Mr. Powers met with the company in order to obtain a final price. The original quoted price was \$110,757 which has been reduced by \$7,000. This reduction may result in the City obtaining some of the topographic survey work locally, if it can be done at a lower cost. Powers recommended the approval of the contract with Surber Barber Choate and Hertlein for \$105,557.

The funding of the project consists of T.E. Grant funds of \$800,000 and our match funds of \$200,000 will come from SPLOST V, the Transportation category.

Councilmember Lunceford moved to accept the recommendation on the contract with Surber Barber Choate and Hertlein for quoted price of \$105,557. Councilmember Belton seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Sign Ordinance Discussion:

During the November 2009 meeting, several business representatives came to the Regular Council meeting with concerns of the sign ordinance. Mayor Usry later met with a small group of citizens from the Chamber board in late 2009. The City agreed to look back at the ordinance and address some issues of concern....confusing language, restrictions on signs of certain types and enforcement. There is also confusion with regard to the sign design guidelines used by the HPC and how they should dovetail with the Sign Ordinance.

(The floor was opened for comments):

Mr. Randy Black – AC Warehouse. Concern with why a 30 year old sign used by a prior business cannot be grandfathered in.

Ms. Jill Mosley – H & H Sign. Sign ordinance is hurting business.

Mrs. Shelia Harmon – H & H Sign. Economy is bad. Businesses are hurting. No money for the signs.

Mr. Randy Gingery - #1 Muffler. Revenue has decreased because of the sign ordinance. No place to put the required signage over the business.

Mr. Willie Myrick – Are we compensated for the signs that are removed from our business?

Mayor Usry commented, stating that the City would do more work on potential solutions to some of the concerns. This would be done in preparation for discussions to take place with a committee comprised of council members and private citizens.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### Pelzer Acoustic Products Building – EIP Loan:

A general discussion was held on Pelzer Acoustic Products (PAP), regarding the fact that this business is now closed and that the City and County have outstanding EIP loans to PAP, secured by the building. The balance left from the existing loans is \$547,599.

The East Central Georgia Consortium / One Stop under Joyce Blevins would like to relocate to this building. There is also a potential for the Labor Department to move to the same building.

The recommendation to the Council is to support this project by working with One-Stop and allowing the building to be returned to the City and the County, forgiving the notes to PAP, and then re-lease to One-Stop and/or partners. This action is dependent on receiving grant funds from the DOL to support additional construction training. This construction training is designed to prepare those being trained for jobs associated with power plant construction in our area over the next 10 years. The City Council gave their support to continue with the project.

### 2009 Budget Amendments:

This is the close of year budget balancing amendments. General fund closed with a positive result of about \$151,000. The Water fund was slightly negative (\$65,000) due to lower actual revenue than budgeted. The Gas, Solid Waste and Maintenance funds were all positive. This final “adjusting” budget amendment is an audit recommendation, balancing the individual revenue and expense accounts.

Councilmember Jones moved to accept the 2009 budget amendments. Councilmember Belton seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

### Resolution to discontinue, abandon and close alley:

The City of Thomson owns an alley located between Milledge Street and First Avenue. This 25 ft wide alley has not been maintained by the City in decades, but is still our property. It is the intent of the City to close this alley and quit-claim it to the adjoining land owners who are Marion Culpepper and Jim Usry. Mr. Usry will receive 6ft and Mr. Culpepper will receive 19ft.

Councilmember Lunceford asked if the City would consider a monetary donation for the property.

Councilmember Jones moved to table this until the Mayor has talked with Mr. Culpepper. Councilmember Lunceford seconded the motion. Tabled until February 2010 meeting.

### David Moore – Salary Adjustment:

The City of Thomson Municipal Court Judge, David Moore has requested an increase in pay. In order to accommodate or offset any increase, Judge Moore agreed to try and reduce our jail expenses by:

- (1) Holding hearings on a weekly basis
- (2) Reviewing the “jail list” daily.
- (3) Reviewing probation revocation procedures.

The current pay that Mr. Moore receives is \$250.00 per month. Mayor Usry is recommending \$600.00 per month, an increase of \$350.00 per month.

Councilmember Belton questioned the timing of an increase. Councilmember Smalley stated that he did not receive the memo and has not had time to study the proposal. By common consent and lack of time to study the proposal increase, this matter was tabled until later.

### Advertisement for Employment – Police Chief:

Police Chief John Hathaway will be retiring this year. An ad for employment has been placed in the McDuffie Mirror, McDuffie Progress, on the GMA website and the Police Chiefs Association website. The deadline for application is February 8, 2010.

### McDuffie County Arts Council request:

The McDuffie County Arts Council is requesting to close Journal Street on May 8 from Main Street to Clary's Alley. They will be hosting the second annual "Arts in the Alley" on this date. Councilmember Lunceford moved to accept the closure. Councilmember Belton seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

**DISCUSSION:**

- The City would like to recognize some of our employees for their good work during the holidays: Nick Climons and Vic Franklin got a water leak located and fixed for the Yarboroughs, who live on Wrightsboro Road. Their efforts were acknowledged by the Yarboroughs in the form of a letter thanking them for their work in the middle of a cold night in December.
- Rick Sewell, the Fire Department passed their annual inspection by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council, Compliance Division.
- The Fire Department also raised and donated \$4110 for the Mayor's Christmas Motorcade.
- The Water Distribution has experience a number of water leaks since Christmas. Scott Huff, department head reported over 27 leaks. They have done a very good job taking care of these problems, especially in the cold weather we experienced in December and January.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35pm.

Dianne L. Landers  
City Clerk