

City of West Columbia, SC

Regular Council Meeting

October 7, 2014 at 6 p.m.

Members Present:

Joe Owens, Mayor
Casey Jordan Hallman, Mayor Pro-Tem
Eric L. Fowler
L. Dale Harley
Boyd J. Jones
Temus C. Miles, Jr.
Tommy Parler
Teddy Wingard
B.J. Unthank

Members Absent:

None

Others Present:

Jenny Cunningham, City Administrator
Myron Corley, Deputy City Administrator
Mardi Valentino, City Clerk/PIO
Rick Hodge, Financial Consultant
Jamie Hook, Sanitation/Streets/Parks Superintendent
Sid Varn, Director of Planning & Engineering

Wyatt Coleman, Fire Chief
Ken Ebener, Municipal Judge
Brian Carter, Assistant City Administrator
Justin Black, City Treasurer
Stuart Jones, Building Official
Members of the Public and Press

Agenda Item I – Call to Order

Chairperson Unthank called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. and noted a quorum was present. *The State, Free Times, Lexington County Chronicle, Cayce-West Columbia News, The Columbia Star* and radio and television stations were notified of the meeting by e-mail on October 3, 2014. A revised agenda was e-mailed October 6, 2014 and a second revised agenda was e-mailed October 7, 2014.

Agenda Item II – Determination of Quorum

Chairperson Unthank noted a quorum was present to conduct business.

Agenda Item III – Invocation

Mayor Owens gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Item IV – Pledge of Allegiance

All attendees at the meeting recited the Pledge of Allegiance before the flag of the United States of America.

Agenda Item V – Announcements/Communications by Mayor

Chairperson Unthank recognized Mayor Owens who commented on an agenda item to appoint a new city representative to the Joint Municipal Water and Sewer Commission.

Agenda Item VI – Presentations and Recognitions

- A. Chairperson Unthank recognized Lt. John Norman with the West Columbia Police Department who introduced Ms. Ashleigh B. Hart as the city's new animal control officer. Lt. Norman said Ms. Hart held a criminal justice degree and had prior experience handling animals. Council members welcomed Ms. Hart as a new employee.

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Agenda Item VI – Presentations and Recognitions (continued)

Chairperson Unthank stated that on September 25, 2014, the city of West Columbia entered into a mutual aid agreement with the Lexington County Sheriff's Department for the joint exercise of police functions for aid as needed.

Chairperson Unthank said on Tuesday, September 30, 2014 citizens were asked to vote in a referendum election to change the form of government from council to mayor-council. He said the peoples' voices were heard loud and clear by a two-to-one margin that the present council form of government is working. He noted that almost 2,000 people voted in the election and he was encouraged to see so many citizens participating in the election process.

Agenda Item VII – Citizens' Requests for Appearance

- A. Chairperson Unthank recognized Mr. Fred Hogan and Mrs. Pat Hogan, who live at 1605 Shull Street. Mrs. Hogan stated that several weeks ago an opossum, a nocturnal animal, crawled into her back yard in the daytime. She was very concerned about how sick the animal was and the numerous puncture wounds it had sustained. She called the police and an officer shot the animal to remove it from her yard. Mrs. Hogan expressed her belief that pets and wildlife are being attacked by feral cats that live in the neighborhood. She recounted seeing birds and squirrels being preyed upon and how they were attacked and killed by vicious, aggressive feral cats. She discussed the Trap/Neuter/Release program the city initiated two years ago. She felt the program encourages feral cats to roam uninhibited as long as they have been spayed or neutered and vaccinated. She referred to other cities' ordinances regarding feral cats that require those animals to be impounded and prohibited from freely roaming. She said that even West Columbia's animal ordinance defines a nuisance animal as, "Any animal(s) that unreasonably annoy humans, endangers life, health or property of other animals or persons, or substantially interferes with the rights of citizens to the enjoyment of life and property."

Mrs. Hogan said instead of the city enacting an ordinance to prevent free-roaming animals from being a nuisance, the T/N/R program encourages nuisance animals. She expressed concern about feral cats not having follow-up vaccinations and treatments to maintain their health and to prevent sickness and diseases such as feline leukemia, distemper and rabies. She questioned the effectiveness of the T/N/R program and the length of time the program would need to be in place to reduce the number of feral cats through the spaying and neutering process. Mrs. Hogan advocated only returning those cats that have been through the T/N/R process to people who wish to care for them rather than releasing all feral cats back into the areas where they were trapped. Those people would be designated as cat owners and should be responsible for the cats. Mrs. Hogan requested for the T/N/R program to be re-evaluated by city residents and businesses owners and not by people who live outside West Columbia. Mr. and Mrs. Hogan thanked council for allowing them to speak.

- B. Chairperson Unthank recognized Ms. Kimberly Roland, Benefits Specialist with Liberty National Life Insurance Company, who spoke on employee insurance programs that her company can offer through payroll deduction. Chairperson Unthank thanked Ms. Roland for her presentation. He stated that council does not usually make decisions on insurance carriers. He said council asks staff to evaluate programs and then make recommendations to council.

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Agenda Item VIII – Approval of Minutes for Previous Meetings

Chairperson Unthank entertained a motion to approve minutes for the regular council meeting held September 2, 2014, the special council meeting held September 15, 2014 and the special council meeting held September 25, 2014. Mayor Owens so moved and Council Member Miles seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item IX – New Business

- A. Chairperson Unthank entertained a motion for first reading consideration of an ordinance to annex .82 acres of property located at 101 Adams Street (TMS# 004660-03-009). Council Member Parler so moved and Council Member Jones seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- B. Chairperson Unthank entertained a motion for consideration of a resolution to approve the financing terms through First Citizens Bank & Trust to purchase 23 mobile data units for the Police Department and equipment for the Sanitation and Parks and Recreation Departments. Council Member Miles so moved and Council Member Harley seconded. Chairperson Unthank recognized City Treasurer Justin Black who explained that First Citizens Bank & Trust requested council to pass a resolution that accepts the financing terms for the lease purchase agreement approved at meeting on September 15, 2014. Chairperson Unthank called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.
- C. Chairperson Unthank entertained a motion for consideration of a proclamation to designate October 2014 as Alpha Delta Kappa Sorority Month. Mayor Owens so moved and Mayor Pro-Tem Hallman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- D. Chairperson Unthank entertained a motion for consideration to approve a bid for the replacement of the brine tank at the Lake Murray Water Treatment Plant. Mayor Owens so moved and Mayor Pro-Tem Hallman seconded. Chairperson Unthank recognized City Engineer Sid Varn, who said the city received three bids on September 24, 2014 with the low bid of \$153,000.00 being submitted by Construction Resource Group, Inc. Mr. Varn said American Engineering Consultants, Inc. reviewed the bids and he recommended that council accept the low bid. Chairperson Unthank called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.
- E. Chairperson Unthank entertained a motion for consideration to approve an emergency request for funding to repair the variable drive for the raw water pump at the Lake Murray Water Treatment Plant. Mayor Owens so moved and Council Member Parler seconded. Chairperson Unthank recognized Mr. Varn, who said the electrical component for the pump that brings raw water into the plant needs to be replaced immediately. He said the pump repair would cost \$19,180, which includes the electrical component, labor for installation and shipping. Mr. Varn said that Collins Controls will handle the repair work. Chairperson Unthank called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.
- F. Chairperson Unthank entertained a motion for consideration to appoint Council Member Dale Harley as the West Columbia representative to the Joint Municipal Water and Sewer Commission. Council Member Jones so moved and Council Member Miles seconded. Council Members Harley, Jones, Fowler, Unthank and Parler voted in favor of the motion. Mayor Owens, Mayor Pro-Tem Hallman, and Council Members Miles and Wingard voted in opposition. The motion passed five votes to four votes.

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Agenda Item IX – New Business (continued)

G. Chairperson Unthank entertained a motion for consideration to appoint Ms. Ashleigh B. Hart as a municipal code enforcement officer for West Columbia Animal Control. Council Member Jones so moved and Mayor Pro-Tem Hallman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item X – Adjourn to Executive Session for a Personnel Matter and a Contractual Matter Concerning a Memorandum of Understanding

Chairperson Unthank entertained a motion to adjourn to executive session. Council Member Jones so moved and Mayor Pro-Tem Hallman seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Council adjourned to executive session at 6:45 p.m.

Agenda Item XI – Reconvene to Regular Session

Chairperson Unthank entertained a motion to adjourn executive session and reconvene to regular session. Mayor Owens so moved and Council Member Miles seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Council reconvened to regular session at 8:45 p.m. Chairperson Unthank stated that no action was taken in executive session.

Agenda Item XII – Adjournment

Chairperson Unthank entertained a motion to adjourn. Council Member Miles so moved and Council Member Parler seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Council adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marta M. Valentino, CMC
City Clerk/Public Information Officer