

**CITY COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP
CITY OF GEORGETOWN, SC
MAY 25, 2006**

Notices of this meeting have been made in accordance with the 1976 Code of Laws of South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

A City Council Budget Workshop was held this date in the Council Chambers at City Hall with Mayor Lynn Wood Wilson presiding.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

	Mayor Lynn Wood Wilson	
Councilmember Brendon M. Barber, Sr.		Councilmember Jack M. Scoville, Jr.
Councilmember Rudolph A. Bradley		Councilmember Clarence C. Smalls
Councilmember Paige B. Sawyer, III		Councilmember Peggy P. Wayne

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Steven E. Thomas, City Administrator
Mrs. Ann U. Mercer, City Clerk

DEPARTMENT HEADS:

Mr. Glenn Dixon, Fleet Maintenance Superintendent
Chief Dan Furr, Georgetown Police Department
Major Johnnie Deas, Georgetown Police Department
Mr. Sterling Geathers, Public Works Director
Mrs. Lynn Griffith, Director of Information Technology
Mrs. Katrina Lawrimore, Director of Kaminski House Museum
Mr. Alan Loveless, Electric Utility Director
Mrs. Jessica Miller, Finance Director
Mr. Lane Mixon, Manager of Water/Wastewater/Stormwater
Mrs. Sabrina Morris, Director of Development
Mrs. Ellen Nespeca, Keep Georgetown Beautiful Executive Director
Chief Joey Tanner, Georgetown Fire Department

NEWS MEDIA

Georgetown Times – Mr. Scott Harper
Sun News - Mrs. Kelly Fuller

Mayor Wilson opened the City Council Budget Workshop at 5:35 PM.

Call to Order

Councilmember Sawyer rendered the invocation and Mayor Wilson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation and Pledge

Mayor Wilson asked that all non-emergency electronic devices be turned off during the Council Budget Workshop.

Mayor Wilson announced Mr. Barber was attending an awards ceremony for his daughter and would arrive later. He turned the meeting over to Mr. Steve Thomas who welcomed everyone to the third budget workshop and reminded Council a public hearing and first reading on the budget is scheduled for June 15, 2006 and a public hearing and second reading is scheduled for June 29, 2006.

Mrs. Lynn Griffith and Mrs. Sabrina Morris gave a presentation on GIS, Geographic Information System. Mrs. Griffith said the Electric, Water and Fire Departments have previously embarked on this process. She said this would require a full-time person to maintain the information...one reason why the City is not further along in the process. Mrs. Morris used a power point presentation from the City of Conway to give Council an idea how critical the system is to Georgetown. When there is any rezoning or annexation, all the zoning maps can be updated immediately. At the present time, when the City has any updates, staff sends the information out, because we do not have in-house GIS, and receive the updated map sometime later. Staff has just about finished with the overlay districts and this could be indicated on the map. Any one from the general public could come in, look at our map, see where the overlay applies and then check the Zoning Ordinance for the specific requirements. She said GIS is very critical to building, planning and zoning for future growth, dilapidated housing, code enforcement, building permits, neighborhood associations, variances and annexation. In the Fire Department this would be helpful to ISO. The location, size of line and the number of fire hydrants would be available. The Police Department could track crime areas, road blocks, traffic patterns and events or festivals. Utility service areas can be mapped, locating water lines, valves, meters, sewer lines, force mains, manholes and pump stations. All streets, sidewalks, impervious areas and stormwater structures would be included as well. Mr. Thomas said there is a critical need for this system and it would take the full-time effort of one person to maintain. He asked Council for their blessing to the concept. Discussions continued.

Presentation on GIS

Mrs. Jessica Miller reviewed the rate/fee schedule, page 4, showing

a 3.08 millage (3.4%) rate increase, a 10% business license increase, a 10% water increase, a 20% wastewater increase, a 33% stormwater increase and a 2.85% waste management increase. She said the monthly impact analysis, page 5, was adjusted to reflect the waste management rate change. Mrs. Miller highlighted the Revenue versus Expenses by Fund and gave a list of changes made since the last workshop. Additions included \$50,000 for boat landing repair at East Bay, \$20,000 for downtown restroom renovation, \$6,000 for Character First Program, \$25,000 for Winyah Auditorium utilities and \$5,000 for a postage machine required by the Post Office. Revenues were increased in Fire Impact Fees, Building and Planning fees and Police fines. Two police cars, one half of a position for the Business License Official and the vehicle associated with that position were all removed from the budget.

**Discuss FY 06/07
Operating Budgets**

Mr. Thomas said with the changes/increases through a domino effect, staff was able to put off an increase of an additional \$400,000 to \$500,000 transfer in the Electric Fund, above and beyond last year's. It is proposed to save the money in transfers from the General Fund to Stormwater and Solid Waste Funds. This would free-up \$170,000 to \$180,000 in the General Fund going to the Stormwater Fund. Removing the transfer from the General Fund to Solid Waste would free up approximately \$270,000. He reiterated the enterprise funds should be self-sufficient. Residents currently pay \$17.50 a month for residential pickup. In order to provide twice a week garbage pickup the rate would need to be more than \$24.00 a month. Staff from Administration, Finance and Public Works met to determine what could be done to become more efficient. It was proposed that Council consider a monthly fee of \$18.00 for once a week garbage pickup. This would reduce the transfer from the General Fund from \$270,000 to \$76,420. In last year's budget, in addition to the transfer, over \$300,000 in cash equity was used to balance this Fund. Also proposed was a transition to a different system for garbage pickup using one person and one clam truck. No employee would lose his job. Over the next year or so, four full-time positions would be lost through attrition. Councilmember Wayne expressed concerns with the type of garbage truck needed. She said a few years ago, Council observed a demonstration and the truck would not work in the Historic District because of the trees. Extensive discussions followed. Councilmember Bradley asked for justification on the amount being transferred from the General Fund to Solid Waste...what is triggering the high cost. Mr. Thomas answered, basically how the City is handling the business of yard waste. It is being proposed to go from a situation where there may

be four or five employees operating several pieces of equipment to one truck and one person. Councilmember Bradley said he did not have a problem with the once a week pickup if he can see some justification. Mr. Thomas said in most budgets, 70% of the cost is related to personnel. With the proposed system and through attrition, the City could save \$200,000 annually. The goal is to operate a system that is self-supporting, remains very efficient, and encourages recycling. Councilmember Smalls asked how the City could justify going to once a week pickup and raising the cost. Mr. Thomas said the present cost is \$17.50 a month for twice a week pickup. Because of all the financial support Solid Waste is receiving from elsewhere, this is an artificial rate. Councilmember Scoville asked what the rate would be if there were no transfers. Mrs. Miller answered, close to \$27.00. The difference in this cost and the current rate is being taken from other sources to cover what is not being collected. This increase is proposed for residential service only. Mr. Thomas said the City does allow for competition for commercial service. He said if the City is in the business of providing service to our businesses, with either rollouts or dumpsters, we should not be allowing competition. Staff is going to examine this very closely and bring back some proposed changes addressing this issue. Councilmember Smalls expressed concern with the proposed budget as it affects the Street Department and the City taxpayers. Councilmember Sawyer suggested charging individuals who do not recycle. Councilmember Bradley asked why the City has not hired a grant writer.

Mayor Pro Tem Barber arrived at 6:50 PM

Mr. Thomas said we are currently in negotiations with the COG to utilize their services for a part-time grants assistant. Discussions continued. Councilmember Bradley commented, "I trust that we don't over emphasized this word of efficient until we become blinded to our obligation to what we are suppose to be doing for the public benefit. Efficiency is a beautiful thing, but at the same time it can be detrimental if we are not careful. That is just a comment I'm making." Councilmember Scoville said to him efficiency is providing first class service at the best possible price. Councilmember Bradley said his comment was made as an encouragement, as a reminder that "we are elected and appointed officials in our obligations to the public." Mayor Wilson said we all agree that it is our role as elected officials to provide the best possible service we can at the best possible price. Mr. Thomas said staff is fully committed to accomplish good quality service at the lowest possible cost and do

**Mayor Pro Tem
Barber Arrived**

everything possible to make Sterling and Jimmy successful if Council approves this proposal. Councilmember Wayne said the citizens are losing because they are going to pay \$9.75 more for once a week pickup. Mayor Pro Tem Barber said the information is misleading..."there will still be a decrease in service." He said when the City tried this before, the workload increased and employees worked longer. He asked Sterling Geathers for his opinion. Mr. Geathers said the workday would be a lot longer.

Mayor Wilson called for a five-minute break at 7:15 PM.

Quite a few questions arose concerning the Winyah Auditorium. Mayor Wilson said the architect has finalized the number and there will be a complete report in June. He suggested having a workshop after the budget is approved. Budget reviews continued. Councilmember Wayne said she felt the livability court employee could handle the responsibilities of the business license official. Councilmember Smalls expressed concerns with capital expenses in the Fire Department and the need for more water lines and fire hydrants in Maryville. Councilmember Sawyer and Mayor Pro Tem Barber concurred with Councilmember Smalls' concern about the water system. Mrs. Miller explained that the money being utilized to service the debt on the fire station is General Fund money; the money it would take for the water improvements is Enterprise Fund money. If Council does not approve the Maryville Fire Station, that money cannot be used in the water fund. Mr. Mixon said the \$250,000 budgeted for the water line to the county marina includes the booster pump for Maryville which will increase the flow. Councilmember Wayne asked about Vehicle Service. Mr. Thomas said staff is trying to work on a plan for some part-time assistance in that department. Councilmember Smalls also expressed concern with the two vehicles in the Electric Utility Fund. Mayor Pro Tem Barber said it would be helpful if Council could receive a summary, breaking down personnel request, any increases, COLAs, etc.

Mrs. Miller said she needs a consensus from Council as the governing body and she can make the changes to the budget. Mr. Thomas said the budget as presented is balanced. Councilmember Bradley sees the biggest controversy is the pros and cons on once a week garbage pickup. He asked, if this proved not workable, "could we revert back." Mrs. Miller said if we embark on a project and see that it is not working and you are not satisfied, Council has the power at any time to amend the budget. After further extensive discussion, Mayor Wilson said as he understands, the budget will be presented

on June 15th for first reading and any details will be worked out in between. This was agreeable with Council.

COUNCILMEMBER BRADLEY MOVED TO ADJOURN THE CITY COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP AND GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO FOIA 30-4-70 (a)(1) TO DISCUSS APPLICANTS FOR CITY ATTORNEY POSITION, SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER SAWYER AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 7-0.

Adjourn City Council Budget Workshop and go into Executive Session

The City Council Budget Workshop adjourned at 8:15 PM.

MAYOR PRO TEM BARBER MOVED TO REOPEN THE CITY COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP, SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER BRADLEY AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 7-0.

Reopen Council Budget Workshop

The City Council Budget Workshop was reopened at 8:29 PM.

No formal action was taken in Executive Session.

COUNCILMEMBER SAWYER MOVED THAT THE CITY OFFER EMPLOYMENT TO ELISE CROSBY FOR THE POSITION OF CITY ATTORNEY WITH THE SALARY TO BE NEGOTIATED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL, SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER BRADLEY. Mayor Wilson asked for discussion. Mayor Wilson called for the question. THE MOTION WAS CARRIED 7-0.

Offer City Attorney Position to Mrs. Elise Crosby

COUNCILMEMBER SMALLS MOVED TO ADJOURN CITY COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP, SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER SAWYER AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 7-0.

Adjourn City Council Budget Workshop

The City Council Budget Workshop was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Ann U. Mercer
City Clerk

DATE APPROVED: 06/15/06
VERIFYING INITIALS: _____



