

Aiken City Council Minutes

April 30, 2012

WORK SESSION

Present: Mayor Cavanaugh, Councilmembers Diggs, Dewar, Ebner, Price and Wells.

Absent: Councilman Homoki

Others Present: Richard Pearce, Stuart Bedenbaugh, Kim Abney, Charles Barranco, Larry Morris, Glenn Parker, Tim Coakley, Alicia Davis, Gary Smith, Sara Ridout, and Amy Banton of the Aiken Standard.

Mayor Cavanaugh called the meeting to order at 4:02 P.M., and stated the purpose of the meeting was a worksession to discuss the proposed budget for fiscal year 2012-13. He thanked Mr. Pearce and staff for all their work on the proposed budget.

BUDGET 2012-13

Mr. Pearce stated it was great to have the opportunity to discuss the proposed budget with Council. The budget tends to be a work in progress. He started with review of the General Fund. He pointed out the revenue stream tends to be fairly flat, particularly with the General Fund. He pointed out the Summary of Revenue for the General Fund. He stated the proposed budget for last year was \$27,200,000. For fiscal year 2012-13 the proposed budget is \$27,090,000. Some of the reasons are that last year we had a COPS grant and ARRA money, however, that money is no longer available. We are continuing to get some grant money for Crosland Park for the weatherization program. We are seeing that our revenues are tending to stay fairly stagnant at this point. He said we are getting some interest from developers and are encouraged that there is potentially some interest in larger retail projects such as the South Park Shopping Center repurposing with the coming of the Fresh Market. We hope with Bridgestone's announcement, the expansion of MTU, and Kimberly Clark's work that we will see people coming to the area. Developers are paying attention to those improvements. We hope that will mean more revenue from business license fees and property taxes as areas are repurposed for development.

Mr. Pearce then reviewed the revenue for the Utilities Fund. He pointed out revenue for the Utilities Fund was up significantly. Last year the budget was \$18,084,834. The proposed revenue for 2012-13 is \$23,363,805. He pointed out the title of the budget is "Managing Mandates." He reviewed the various mandates which are increasing the budgets. He stated there was a high reading of radium at the Shiloh Springs water supply. The City has been monitoring the radium levels. The readings that DHEC has gathered have mandated remediation action. We have worked with an engineering group and have come up with a filtration system for Shiloh Springs. The filtration system will last about 8 to 10 years. The projected cost is about \$1.5 million to put the filter in. The cost of producing water at Shiloh Springs is about \$.24 per 1,000 gallons. Even with the remediation action, the cost for producing water at Shiloh will be \$.54 per 1,000 gallons. We feel we will be able to recover this cost. However, it will take an immediate expenditure of money. We will borrow from the General Fund to help with that expense. The Silver Bluff Water Plant Project is projected at \$4.2 million, which also includes two wells. We also have the Water Meter Project. The batteries need to be replaced in the sender units. The batteries last about 10 years. In the last 10 years the technology has improved. This project costs \$1.2 million.

Council then discussed the water meter radio read program. It was pointed out the program has been very cost effective. It was pointed out the City has two trucks and two people to read the water meters. Presently it takes about two days to read the meters. In the past we had six people reading the meters, and it took two weeks every month to read the meters. Ms. Abney pointed out in addition to replacing the batteries this time, we also need to replace the brass meters. The life of the brass meters is about 20 years, and

our meters are close to 20 years old. It was stated we did not change the brass when we went with the Orion ten years ago.

Mr. Morris stated the life of the brass is still about 20 years. If we have enough funding we want to go with the electronic stainless steel meters, and they will keep running as long as we change the batteries every 10 years. In response to a question from Councilman Dewar if there is a signal when the batteries stop working, Ms. Abney stated the meters just stop, and we have a no read and have to change the battery.

Councilman Ebner asked if we had done a cost analysis on industrial grade flow meters versus the brass meters. Mr. Morris pointed out the life expectancy of stainless steel meters is over double the life of brass with a battery change. The cost of the stainless is about three times the cost of brass. Councilman Ebner asked if that had been equated to changing meters. Mr. Morris stated staff had looked at it as far as changing meters on a 10 year life cycle, and feel that it would be economical for us to change to stainless, as they are more stable than brass. Over a 20 year period the brass will slow down, and we could lose as much as 2% of the readings and more than that at 20 years. The stainless steel meters do not have that problem. They do not slow down because there are no moving parts.

Councilman Dewar asked time-wise what is involved in just changing batteries and changing the whole unit. Mr. Morris responded it takes about 5 minutes to change a battery. It takes only about 15 minutes to change the meter.

Councilman Ebner pointed out that 2% of 3.2 million gallons at \$.70 per 1,000 gallons is a lot of money. He felt staff should do a real cost analysis. He stated the flow meters work with junk. He pointed out our water is pretty clean, but it does corrode copper and plastic. He said we need to do a cost analysis as to whether a 40 year meter is better than a 20 year meter when the battery is changed every 10 years and the loss of 2% of the reading in 10 years and 4% and 10% in 20 years. You can't justify the loss of money.

In response to a question by Councilman Dewar, Mr. Morris stated the stainless meters should last indefinitely, but the batteries will need to be changed in 10 years. He said the electronic meter technology has been around in industry for many years. He pointed out lightning strikes have destroyed some brass meters, but lightning does not seem to strike the stainless meters. Councilman Dewar asked then if it was worth doing a study to figure out which way we should go. Mr. Pearce stated this is something we have discussed with the supplier.

Councilman Ebner stated he felt we should do a cost analysis and give the numbers to Council.

Mr. Pearce continued with discussion of the major capital items in the Utilities Fund. He stated pumps, generators, and surge protectors have been requested in the waste water operations at a cost of about \$358,000. Also, in the Waste Water Division there is about \$900,000 budgeted for lift station work and \$300,000 for sewer replacement work. At Shaws Creek \$130,000 is budgeted for maintenance work. The total of those projects is about \$8.6 million. Storm sewer work would require \$200,000. Another mandate of the Federal Communications Commission is narrow banding all of the radio frequencies to create more frequencies. The City must have the narrow banded frequency radios in place by January, 2013. There are some repeaters on the towers that we can reconfigure, others are old and need to be replaced. This cost amounts to about \$400,000 to \$450,000. We first have to apply for and get the frequencies that we will be using in the narrow banding system before we have a definite cost. We budgeted \$190,000 in last year's budget and \$190,000 in this year's budget for the narrow banding. We have some depreciation funds to make up any difference. Changing to narrow banded radios is a mandate. This affects the General Fund, the Utility Fund, Stormwater Fund, Victim's Fund and any division that has a radio. Mr. Pearce pointed out that Motorola was awarded the state contract, and the city staff has been in discussion with them regarding changing our radios.

Councilman Dewar asked if this would just be a frequency change or new radios. Mr. Pearce responded it is both. We have to go to the new frequencies, and we need new radios. We do have some existing equipment in Public Safety that can be reprogrammed and used. He pointed out since we have a federal mandate, it would be nice in an emergency situation if every department could communicate, and the narrow banding does provide that opportunity. He said there are several systems available. One option is the Palmetto 800 system. He said it is felt that the system Motorola can provide would be a help for us. He pointed out Public Safety has enough of the Palmetto 800 units that they could use in an area emergency such as the Graniteville train derailment to communicate with area agencies.

Councilman Dewar pointed out Mr. Pearce is talking about mandates Council was not aware of last year. He wondered if there are any other mandates that might be coming up. He pointed out there is so much change going on.

Mr. Pearce stated the FCC narrow banding is a big issue. It is something we have talked about for a couple of years. It was a big unknown last year when we discussed the budget. The timing was unknown. There was a start date and then that was changed. Now we know the deadline in January, 2013.

Mr. Pearce pointed out the proposed budget has the budgets for the various departments as well as the revenue for the various funds. He asked if Council had any specific questions. Mr. Pearce pointed out the expenditure summary for the various departments. He stated in preparing for the budget requests he had told the departments to include funds for the frozen positions in their department. Staff also looked at a potential 1% Cost of Living adjustment. He pointed out, however, he did not see the General Fund revenues increasing to the point where the frozen positions could be funded. He stated we will have to go another year and not fill those positions. We do have in the salary figures in the Work Budget a 1% increase. He said he would not implement any salary adjustment until after we do the budget reconciliation for the 2011-12 budget, which is usually at the end of July or August. He said we should be able to know at that point what funding we have available as far as supporting any salary increase from unspent funds.

Councilman Dewar pointed out Neighborhood Services Division had gone from \$204,000 to \$184,000 and now \$69,000. He wondered why as this is a major reduction.

Mr. Pearce pointed out there were five employees in NDS. The secretary resigned and the job has not been filled. The Inspector position was moved to Building Inspections. The Neighborhood Coordinator was moved to Public Safety in the Community Services Division to work with neighborhood events. In the past Neighborhood Services Division has been under the City Manager's Office. The current duties for Neighborhood Services are projects that need to be completed. Mr. Morris has talked about some of his needs at Horizons as far as project management. We plan to have the Neighborhood Services staff, including the Neighborhood Services Supervisor and the Community Development Planner, report to George Grinton and Steve Barbay. We feel that will be a great help, particularly with the projects that we have in Crosland Park, in Edgewood and projects with Habitat. He pointed out the Housing Authority has some people who have been renting housing and have repaired their credit, so they may be considering homeownership and may possibly purchase housing in Crosland Park. Also, there may be some renters in Crosland Park renting from the city, and they may be qualified now to purchase a home. Mr. Pearce stated the city has worked well with USC-Aiken, Aiken Tech, the Housing Authority, and the faith community on projects in Crosland Park. Mr. Morris is ready to get permits to start the Safe Routes to School project, which is the sidewalks and lighting to the North Aiken schools. He said he felt we may be seeing a breakthrough to get some of the houses sold in Crosland Park.

Councilwoman Price how many employees are in the Information Technology Division. Mr. Pearce responded there are five employees in the IT Division.

Councilman Dewar asked about the Administrative Services Division pointing out it seems to be new, as there is no history for the division. Mr. Pearce responded that would

be one of the divisions under the newly created Public Services Department, which was formed when we split the Public Works Department into two departments.

Councilman Dewar also pointed out the difference in the budget amounts from last year for some divisions. He pointed out the Athletics Division had been \$930,000, and the proposed budget is \$626,000. He pointed out other division budgets which had significantly been lowered.

Mr. Pearce pointed out the department request amount included funding for the frozen positions. His recommendation does not include funding for the frozen positions. He pointed out the budget for 2010-11 was \$30,000,000, but his proposed budget is \$27,000,000.

Councilwoman Price expressed concern about decreasing staff in several areas. Mr. Pearce responded that the lower numbers reflect the retirement of some senior employees. It also reflects no funding for the frozen positions.

Councilwoman Price asked for a listing of the frozen positions.

Councilman Dewar stated he would be concerned if there is a reduction in Public Safety that impacts capabilities, or in Engineering & Utilities for maintenance of infrastructure.

Mr. Pearce stated six employees are being added in the Engineering & Utilities Department to work on repairing water leaks. There is a significant difference in the initial request from Public Safety and his recommendation. He said that difference was in the salaries for the Driver/Operators. That was worked out with scheduling for the employees. He said positions were not eliminated, but filling some positions has been frozen. He also pointed out there had been transfer of employees to other divisions.

Councilwoman Price stated Councilman Dewar had mentioned some areas that she was concerned about. She pointed out that we want to maintain experienced and skilled employees. She pointed out that a few years ago we lost many law enforcement officers to Savannah River Site. She said the city has invested in training of employees, and we would like to keep those we have trained. She stated if people enjoy their work and enjoy their management they will stay, in spite of the salary.

Mr. Pearce pointed out the Worker's Compensation premiums. He said last year the city's payment was about \$30,000 which was a significant reduction from previous years. This year the payment is projected to be \$3,000. This is a sign of a safe working, happy work force.

Councilman Dewar asked if Council would get an updated briefing from Public Safety on the actions taken since we lost two officers, lessons learned, impact to the community, etc.

Mr. Pearce stated the recent programs "Food for Thoughts" events were part of the package. Information from those meetings will be compiled and presented to Council. He pointed out initially we doubled the patrol and backups were called, depending on the nature of the call received. He said cooperative efforts with neighboring agencies has gotten stronger. Staff numbers have not increased, but we have lost some employees. Recently four recruits were hired, and additional people will be hired soon. He said some officers were transferred from the Community Services Division to the Patrol Division, those being experienced employees.

Councilman Dewar expressed concern about the number of experienced employees that will be retiring from Public Safety.

Councilman Ebner asked if staff would look at the number of employees we have out of grade for their position because of the length of time they have worked for the city. He also pointed out in information from the CAFR the number of Public Safety Officers is basically the same for the last five years. He wondered if there are more officers on the streets today. Mr. Barranco responded that a few months ago there were 10 officers

assigned to each of the four shifts patrolling the areas. Some positions were reallocated from Community Services, and now we have 12 officers assigned to each of the four shifts. He said they still have some vacancies, but when we are fully staffed there will be 12 officers on each shift.

Councilman Ebner wondered if the 16 new employees will fill the needs and the shortage we have, as well as the vacancies to be created when some officers retire.

Mr. Barranco pointed out we have 48 patrol officers. He felt the arrangement now is working well. He stated we have more boots on the ground in the Patrol Division and also in the Community Services Division. He pointed out there are 89 sworn Public Safety Officers, which includes Investigators, etc. He said he had hired four employees since he became Director. There are still two Lieutenant vacancies to fill.

Councilwoman Price asked Mr. Barranco what he felt he needed to ensure the officers are protected and that there is adequate staff.

Mr. Barranco stated currently there are nine vacancies. There are 12 in the process of going through the testing for the positions. He pointed out it may take up to 18 months to get the new employees trained and on the road. There are some new young officers, but there are also some officers who are already certified in law enforcement.

Councilman Ebner then discussed his philosophy about city revenue curves. He presented a chart which he had plotted. He said he had asked Mr. Pearce to take the data he had provided and analyze it. He said he had brought this matter up in Horizons. He said he had done a revenue curve. He pointed out from 1992 to 2005 the average increase in revenue was about 2.5% each year. From 2005 to 2008 the revenue went up over 7% a year, and we spent the money every year. He said he had used 2% a year as an increase in revenue as a talking point. In the last four years at 2% a year that would be \$2 million that did not come in to offset inflation. He stated we had inflation during that time, as the price of gasoline increased, etc. He said he had looked at the amount of revenue decrease from the peak, which was in 2009. From 2009 to 2012 we are down \$1.3 million in revenue, which is a 5% drop. He said that would put us back to the low in revenue in 2008. He said he then considered the reoccurring costs—things we have been doing for a long time—but now we don't have the revenue increase. He pointed out the Pension plan increased \$226,000 last year. Mr. Pearce pointed out part of the increase in the pension plan was the smoothing after the losses we incurred in 2008. Councilman Ebner then pointed out we have the Local Option I, II, and III incurred costs. He pointed out some projects such as Hitchcock Woods water and other things which will require maintenance. In addition, we will still have inflation and wage increases. He pointed out the garbage service is not paying for itself and is being supplemented by the General Fund. He said these costs amount to about \$1.4 million a year. He pointed out before we had been having an increase in revenue each year. However, revenue is now going down, but costs are still there. He said we are spending money like we did in 2006. He said his concern is that if revenue does not increase (it decreased about 1% this past year) and even if it stays flat, and this continues we will be back near the 2005 and 2006 budget, which was about \$20 million. He was wondering how long we can go without getting into trouble. He cited the Greer scenario. He felt it would be wise to look at the revenue and look at our incurred costs, which are still increasing. He felt at some point we have to be sure we can provide the services we are presently providing. He said according to the CAFR the city had 310 employees in 2001. In 2008 we had 366 employees. In 2012 we have 371 employees. We increased 61 employees in 10 years. Public Safety employees increased 30, Parks & Recreation increased 13, and staff 7 employees. He pointed out, however, that the Public Works Department only got 2 new employees in 10 years. He said we wonder why we have water leaks and road issues. He said we need to take a look at this. He asked that Mr. Pearce look at these matters in more detail. He was concerned that at some point we will not be able to furnish the services we provide with the revenue we have. We pointed out we are spending a couple million dollars less a year to provide services. We have the same people and less money to spend.

Mr. Pearce pointed out that he had not been increasing expenditures in the General Fund because the revenue has gone down. He said we look at other sources for funds, like the

Accommodations Tax money, which has increased. He said it helps to the extent that we can do work that is tourism related and then pay for it. One example is that we need to replace a tennis court. We have tennis tournaments which bring in people from far away and provide money from the Accommodations Tax funding to maintain the tennis courts. He pointed out there are times we get money, and it can only be used for specific purposes such as the Accommodations Tax funds and the Victims' Services funds. He pointed out the One Cent Sales tax is wonderful to build great facilities, replace aging infrastructure, etc., but once we have the facilities we have to maintain them. Mr. Pearce stated the concerns are valid points. The auditors are here, and they look at cash reserves. From an auditing basis, they want to see the city have 3 to 6 months in cash reserves. He said presently we have about 5 months in cash reserves.

Councilman Dewar asked if Mr. Pearce had factored extra money in revenue from taxes for the South Park Center project.

Mr. Pearce stated if their project is approved, and they follow their timeline, the Fresh Market would not be in business until January, 2013. That means it would be reassessed in 2013, and the taxes would be due in January, 2014. It was pointed out that they would be paying sales tax and would have to purchase a business license. The business license would be based on a basic fee until the following year, when they would have gross receipts to report for figuring the business license. It was pointed out that sometimes it is 18 months before a business pays property taxes and pays the full business license based on gross receipts. It was pointed out that sometimes this is an incentive for businesses to locate in the city limits. Council wants to encourage businesses in the city and not drive them outside the city.

Mr. Pearce then reviewed the Utilities Fund proposed budget. He pointed out that the 8% increase in water and sewer rates that Council approved have been included in the revenue. He pointed out the Holding Funds Transfer and Depreciation Fund Transfers. Also, revenue from a loan is included for the remediation of Shiloh Springs and the filtration system.

Councilman Wells asked about the cost of \$.24 per 1,000 gallons that had been quoted as the cost of providing water from Shiloh Springs. He wondered if that was the actual cost. Mr. Morris stated he had taken the actual audited budget for the past five years and actual flows for the past five years and calculated the cost. He felt that was a true cost for Shiloh. The cost did not include capital costs, but does include electricity, chemicals, manpower, and the cost of pumping. He felt this is a low cost.

Mr. Pearce pointed out the cost for Shaws Creek is higher because of the infrastructure that is in place, staffing, etc. Shiloh is a well, as opposed to Shaws Creek, which is a surface water treatment. The cost for Shaws Creek is about \$.88 per 1,000 gallons.

In response to a question from Councilwoman Price, Mr. Morris responded that Shiloh is an aquifer on top of a very thick clay layer. Shaws Creek is pulling surface water out of Shaws Creek. Shaws Creek starts in Edgefield County as a spring. The aquifer that we pull the well water from is 500 feet deep. It goes nowhere near either Shiloh or Shaws.

Councilman Dewar asked questions about the special holding accounts and the depreciation accounts and how they were listed in the budget. Mr. Pearce and Ms. Abney explained the difference between the special holding and the depreciation accounts and how they are listed in the budget.

Mr. Pearce pointed out the Loan Proceeds from the General Fund of \$2.9 million. Last year Council approved a loan of \$3.7 million from the General Fund, which was for the Silver Bluff Plant. The money this year is for water meters and remediation work at Shiloh and will be paid back to the General Fund from the annual depreciation amount, which is \$1.2 million.

Mr. Pearce then reviewed the summary of the expenditures for the Utilities Fund which amount to \$23,363,805. He pointed out that last year's total expenditures for the Utilities

Fund were \$18,084,834. The increase is for the additional remedial work, pump work, and lift station work.

Mr. Pearce pointed out the other funds including the theater operation, the stormwater fund, Sunday sales money, Victim's Advocacy, airport, Community Block Grant, Northside projects, and Crosland Park. He asked if Council had any questions about those funds.

Councilman Ebner pointed out the Airport Fund, with revenues and expenditures balancing. He stated he felt other money is spent on the area that is considered the airport. He said he was not talking about the industrial parks. He stated the city mows the grass and does other work at the airport. He felt there is other money spent in maintaining the airport that is not shown in this fund and must be coming from some other fund. He wondered how many acres staff mows at the airport. Councilman Ebner asked if staff could have a figure of the number of acres the city mows outside of the leased area at the May 14 Council meeting. He felt this could be a large expense for the city.

Mr. Pearce stated the plan is for Council to meet at the airport at 5 p.m. on Monday, May 14. Mike Laver will be there to talk about the fixed base operator's lease space. He said Mr. Morris will get the acreage that the city mows.

Councilman Dewar stated he felt Councilman Ebner's point is well taken. He pointed out we divide the cost of expenses for IT, with some in the General Fund and some in the Utilities Fund. He said if Utilities funds are paying for mowing the grass, perhaps that expense should be charged to the airport fund to pay for airport expenses out of the airport account.

Mr. Pearce pointed out the City owns the airport and the city is mowing the grass on the land that the city owns.

Councilman Dewar stated he had asked for a comprehensive review of the airport. He stated the Aiken Airport is one of the most beautiful airports in the state. He wondered how it could be maintained for \$52,000. He felt the airport should be a revenue generator for the city. He said he understands the city gets 5 cents for every gallon of fuel sold, and it has been that amount for a long time. He pointed out we have budgets that go up every year. He felt there should be more revenue from the operation of the airport. He pointed out the federal government has helped us. They have funded the ILS, lighting, and runway. The city gets revenue from three sources at the airport—hangar rent, the fuel flow fee, and the FBO franchise fee. He wondered if the city sees the FBO's financial information.

Councilman Wells stated now it may become a revenue generator for the city, since improvements have been made and there may be more traffic at the airport.

Councilman Ebner stated his concern is that if the city were not mowing the grass, we could grow trees.

Mr. Pearce stated we do grow trees at the airport, but not on the part we are mowing because you have to have a certain cleared area. He pointed out the revenue for the airport is low this year because we don't have grants for projects at the airport.

After discussion the general feeling was that Council needs to take a look at the airport and revenue from the airport.

Mr. Pearce stated Mr. Morris will prepare some information on the airport for Council before the meeting on May 14 so Council can make their sentiments known to the FBO.

Mayor Cavanaugh asked why Council would be going to the airport on the night of a Council meeting. He felt the airport and the Council meeting are two major items and the meeting on the airport could go for two hours. He felt the meetings should be kept

separate. He felt if they had a meeting at the airport, they would have to rush back to the regular Council meeting.

Councilman Dewar stated his understanding is that with the contract we have, the FBO is required to give us a financial document so we know we are getting what he is supposed to give the city. He felt with the beautiful airport we have, that the city should be getting more money, especially with the increase in traffic at the airport.

Mr. Pearce stated he was familiar with the fuel flow reports to justify the revenue for the fuel sold. Also, we have the hangar leases at the airport. He pointed out the terminal building was built as an economic engine. A lot of prospects will fly in and meet in the conference room at the airport. He suggested that staff have information on the airport for Council on May 14, and then Council can set up a separate meeting to discuss the airport.

Councilwoman Price stated three of the city's water tanks need to be painted. She pointed out the cost for painting one is a lot more than the others, and she wondered how often we paint the water tanks and why one costs so much.

Mr. Morris responded that the water tanks are painted about every 15 years. He said we take the paint off down to the metal and do multi-layer coating. He pointed out the Chesterfield Street tank is large and has more steel to be painted, which makes it more costly to paint. The tanks are painted outside and inside.

Councilman Ebner asked Mr. Pearce to explain how the industrial parks work. He wondered if they were independent, or if the city has to mow the grass and maintain the parks.

Mr. Morris stated we have Verenes Industrial Park and Ventures Park. He said the city does not do any maintenance at the Verenes Industrial Park. The roadway is maintained by the state. In Ventures the roadway is maintained by the County. However, one of the agreements with the companies in the park is that they pay a regime fee. For the fee the City is required to maintain the street lights and keep the grass mowed. The City also has to maintain the detention ponds and storm drainage system.

Mr. Pearce pointed out that the regime fee revenue should be included in the Ventures budget. He pointed out the \$100,000 is a grant from Aiken Electric Cooperative for a building site for potential economic development.

Councilman Dewar asked about the sale of homes in Crosland Park.

Mr. Pearce stated we are projecting to sell about three homes in Crosland Park. There are about six people who are qualifying to buy homes. If there were more people interested in buying homes, we could get more homes ready to sell.

Councilman Ebner pointed out he had worked with Habitat to provide sheds in Crosland Park. He said 22 sheds had been built using Aiken Tech and USC-Aiken students.

Mr. Pearce pointed out sheds are also used at the two community gardens, one in Crosland Park and one in Governor Aiken Park.

Councilwoman Price asked about the \$1,000,000 designated for Open Space. She wondered if it was designated for Equestrian Open Space. Mr. Pearce responded that it was not designated for Equestrian, but should just be listed as Open Space. He pointed out it was listed that way at one time when we were talking with the Whitney Trust and a possible partnership with the Whitney Polo Field. He stated the \$1,000,000 in the 017 Capital Sales Tax money is listed as Open Space.

Councilwoman Diggs asked if there were any plans to use some of the Northside Development money in Governor Aiken Park.

Mr. Pearce responded that staff had looked at possibly three homes in Edgewood, but had not talked about Governor Aiken Park at this time. He said we could look at that.

Councilman Dewar asked about the Planning Commission Capital Improvements Program. He questioned the item listed as Toole Hill Recreation Center and if we would be spending \$2 million in 2013-14. Mr. Pearce stated that should be listed as Eustis Park Senior/Youth Center. He pointed out that the 017 Capital Sales Tax money would not start coming in until 2014. He stated when the third round of money starts coming in Aiken County distributes it to the small jurisdictions initially like Wagener, Burnnettown, Salley, etc.

Councilman Dewar asked if we were prepared to identify the staff needs to run the Eustis Park Senior/Youth Center and get them into a budget before we start building it.

Mr. Pearce stated we could do that. The money we have on hand now is the \$1 million for the planning and design for the Eustis Park Center. Some of that has been spent getting appraisals, etc. and an offer to the School District for a small strip of land.

Councilman Dewar asked if the present location of the Aiken County Complex would be a better location for the Senior/Youth Center when Aiken County builds their new complex.

Mr. Pearce stated Aiken County had not indicated any interest in selling the tract of land on which the present County Complex is located. The commitment they have made is that they are going to tear down the old complex once they move into the new County Complex. They hope to break ground on the County Complex this summer. He said he did not know what their long range plan may be.

Mayor Cavanaugh stated regarding Councilman Dewar's question concerning staff needs for the Eustis Park Senior/Youth Center, how will that be handled. Mr. Pearce stated the center would probably be under the Recreation Department and more employees will be needed to staff the facility.

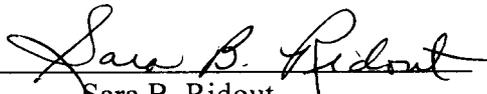
Councilwoman Price stated she felt Glenn Parker, Recreation Director, had managed staff and facilities very well. She pointed out the tennis courts and the addition of other facilities around the city had been staffed and handled extremely well.

Councilman Dewar asked if we were working to try to help the private tennis clubs such as the Fermata, Woodside and Houndslake, that enable us to put the tennis tournaments on.

Mr. Parker responded initially they wanted the city to help with resurfacing, but that would be very expensive. He said we are looking at renting some courts during the tournament. The courts take maintenance, and while we use the courts they cannot be used for teaching, so they are losing revenue.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 5:44 P.M.


Sara B. Ridout
City Clerk

Aiken City Council Minutes

April 30, 2012

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

Present: Mayor Cavanaugh, Councilmembers Diggs, Dewar, Ebner, Price and Wells.

Absent: Councilman Homoki

Others Present: Richard Pearce, Stuart Bedenbaugh, Kim Abney, Charles Barranco, Gary Smith, Larry Morris, Sara Ridout, and Amy Banton of the Aiken Standard.

Mayor Cavanaugh called the special meeting to order at 5:46 P.M. He said the purpose of the meeting was to consider approving a resolution for the Mike Harvey Award.

Mr. Pearce stated Council needs to consider approving two resolutions approving the awarding of the Mike Harvey Award. The Public Safety Department has an awards ceremony which takes place on May 10, 2012. The Awards Committee has nominated Edward Scott Richardson and Sandra Elizabeth Rogers to receive this award posthumously. Mike Harvey was a Public Safety Officer who lost his life in the line of duty. The Awards Committee feels it is appropriate that Scott Richardson and Sandy Rogers receive this recognition. Under the criteria for granting this award, it can only be bestowed if Council adopts a resolution approving this award. He said two resolutions have been prepared if Council wishes to bestow the Mike Harvey Award on Edward Scott Richardson and Sandra Elizabeth Rogers.

Public Safety Director Barranco stated the award, which was designed in the 1980's, is a red, white and blue ribbon with a city seal. A United States flag will also be presented to the families as well.

Mr. Pearce stated the presentation will be part of the awards ceremony that will be held on May 10, 2012, at Newberry Hall. City Councilmembers are invited to the awards ceremony.

Councilwoman Diggs moved, seconded by Councilwoman Price, that Council pass the resolutions approving the awarding of the Mike Harvey Award to Edward Scott Richardson and Sandra Elizabeth Rogers. The motion was unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 5:49 P.M.


Sara B. Ridout
City Clerk