

Aiken City Council Minutes

June 23, 1997

Present: Mayor Cavanaugh, Councilmembers Anaclerio, Clyburn, Papouchado, Perry, Price, and Radford.

Others Present: Steve Thompson, Gary Smith, Frances Thomas, Richard Abney, Ed Evans, Roger LeDuc, Stanley Quarles, Andy Anderson, Anita Lilly, Terry Rhinehart, Sara Ridout, Tom Smith of the Aiken Standard, Chastity Kirkland of the Augusta Chronicle, and 7 citizens.

Mayor Cavanaugh called the meeting to order at 7:35 P.M. Councilwoman Price led in prayer which was followed by the pledge of allegiance to the flag. The minutes of the regular meeting of June 9, 1997, were considered for approval. Councilwoman Papouchado moved that the minutes be approved as written. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Clyburn and unanimously approved.

AIKEN HISTORIC REGISTER - ORDINANCELandmarkJohnson, C.C. Building300 Park Avenue SEHistoric SiteTax Parcel No. 30-048-01-007

Mayor Cavanaugh stated an ordinance had been prepared for Council's consideration to designate the C. C. Johnson Building on Park Avenue to the Aiken Historic Register.

Mr. Thompson read the title of the ordinance.

AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING THE C. C. JOHNSON BUILDING AT 300 PARK AVENUE SE AS A LANDMARK UNDER THE CITY OF AIKEN HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE.

Mr. Thompson stated City Council has received a recommendation from the Planning Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission to designate the C.C. Johnson Building, located at 300 Park Avenue SE to the Aiken Historic Register as a landmark.

Under the designation of historic properties a building or structure may be designated either within a historic district, or individually as a landmark. In this instance, the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Jackson, have requested designation of the building as significant to the Aiken community and to the lives of persons significant in history. In the description, the owners note that the building was constructed between 1899 and 1904, on the site of the former Park Avenue Hotel. Dr. Charles Calett Johnson was the first black physician to practice in Columbia, and in 1919 Dr. Johnson purchased the building on Park Avenue in Aiken as an investment. According to the Aiken Standard, "Dr. Johnson was successful in the drug and pharmaceutical business here. Dr. Johnson organized the Palmetto Medical Association."

The Preservation Commission unanimously recommended adding the C.C. Johnson Building to the Aiken Historic Register as a landmark. The Commission's recommendation for designation includes both the rear building and the one-story side annex on the east side. The Planning Commission has reviewed this recommendation and unanimously recommends that the designation request be approved.

Councilman Anaclerio moved, seconded by Councilwoman Price and unanimously approved that the ordinance to designate the C.C. Johnson Building, located at 300 Park Avenue SE in Aiken, to the Aiken Historic Register as a landmark be passed on first reading and that second reading and public hearing be set for the next regular meeting of City Council.

VALLEY PUBLIC SERVICE AUTHORITY - ORDINANCEAgreementLoanSewer LinesIncrease in FeesFire Service FeesWater District

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council needed to consider first reading of an ordinance amending the agreement with the Valley Public Service Authority.

Mr. Thompson read the title of the ordinance.

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF AIKEN TO ENTER INTO A SERVICE AGREEMENT WITH VALLEY PUBLIC SERVICE AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE WATER SERVICE TO CERTAIN PROPERTIES WITHIN THE CITY OF AIKEN WATER SERVICE DISTRICT.

Mr. Thompson stated the city has an agreement with the Valley Public Service Authority that was essentially a court ordered agreement from the early 1980's. The agreement has several weaknesses. Mr. Thompson stated for the past several years the city has been working with the Valley Public Service Authority (VPSA) to amend the agreement and to resolve the outstanding loan balance due to the city from the VPSA. An ordinance has been prepared for Council's consideration amending the agreement between the City and the VPSA to correct the problems in the agreement and resolving the outstanding loan.

Under the present Court Order and agreement with the VPSA for service to the properties around the American Hearth Motel, the terms of the payment from the VPSA are subject to a great deal of interpretation. Over the last 10 years we have been attempting to clarify this agreement with a new ordinance and agreement between the City and the VPSA. The proposed ordinance includes these modifications. City Council approved this ordinance on first reading in February, 1996, but the staff was unable to resolve several issues prior to the second reading of the ordinance. We are suggesting that Council start the process over, with first reading of a new ordinance.

Mr. Thompson stated the city benefits most from the ordinance in a financial sense by asking the VPSA to collect fire service fees from the customers on the VPSA system within the city's fire service area. Problems were encountered on the collection issue, and although the VPSA will continue to collect fire service fees the city's revenue will not be as great. Therefore we are recommending that the VPSA pay a greater portion of the outstanding balance due. The agreement also permits the following:

1. Water and sewer rates are to be adjusted every five years, based on cumulative CPI. In the past the city has not been able to adjust the water and sewer rates in this area.
2. The agreement specifically identifies the properties to be included in the agreement.
3. The city originally loaned the VPSA a total of \$20,665.89, at an interest rate of 10%, compounded from the bond date of March 1, 1984. The city received a partial payment on this, but the cumulative interest brought the total amount due from the VPSA to \$43,473.31. The staff's recommendation is to reduce this amount to a total of \$34,173.25, based on the amount that had accumulated by January 1, 1994. During the discussions of the agreement, the city had offered to allow the VPSA to make the payments on this over a two year period. The VPSA countered with a proposal that they would pay the entire amount due, at the negotiated lower rate, but they would like to have credit for the interest that the city would have received on this second year of service. This adjusted amount of \$34,173.25 gives the VPSA credit of approximately \$840 for interest.
4. The VPSA will continue to collect fire charges and other charges levied on out-of-city customers at the rates provided by the city, with the revenues to be remitted to the City of Aiken less a 5% collection fee. The monthly revenues for fire service charges are estimated at approximately \$438.

During the discussions in 1996, City Council suggested that the city include a condition in the agreement that would apply to the waiver of fees due to the city. The VPSA requested a receipt showing that the amount owed is paid in full, and City Council suggested that we could provide a receipt if the

agreement includes a stipulation that if, for whatever reason, the VPSA is not able to stay with the contract, that the amount due from the VPSA does remain as a declining debt, declining over a period of ten years.

The VPSA Board has agreed to the terms and conditions outlined in the proposed agreement, including the amount due to resolve this issue. Mr. Thompson stated his recommendation is that if Council approves the agreement that the City Attorney be authorized to include the proposed changes in the new agreement and that the Mayor be authorized to sign the agreement for the city.

Council discussed briefly the services provided in the VPSA service area with Roger LeDuc, Public Works Director, answering Council's questions.

Councilman Anaclerio moved, seconded by Councilwoman Price and unanimously approved, that the ordinance amending the agreement with the Valley Public Service Authority be passed on first reading authorizing the Mayor to sign the amended agreement with the provisions included in the ordinance and that second reading and public hearing be set for the next regular meeting of City Council.

BUDGET 1996-97 - ORDINANCE

Amendment

Mayor Cavanaugh stated an ordinance had been prepared for first reading to amend the 1996-97 budget.

Mr. Thompson read the title of the ordinance.

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET OF THE CITY OF AIKEN FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 1996 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 1997.

Mr. Thompson stated throughout the year the city has expenses that will adjust the budget and instead of submitting these budget adjustments with each individual expense, City Council approves these at the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Thompson stated generally the budget adjustments include equipment that was budgeted in the previous fiscal year, but the equipment was not delivered until the next fiscal year. The adjustments for 1996-97 include several major projects, including the purchase of a new ladder fire truck at \$245,370; renovations of Public Safety Station 2 at \$330,050; the purchase of the new traffic control poles for the downtown at \$109,185; replacement of the Newberry Street bridge at \$144,000; parkway and street renovations at \$70,000; the widening of the Odell Weeks walking track at \$78,400; the Weeks Gym at \$581,000; and installation of a portion of the new sewer system in Crosland Park at \$66,100. There are also many smaller expenses, including computers and radios, and in each case these projects have been approved in the previous budget or approved as an exception by City Council on the open City Council agenda.

The budget adjustments will increase the General Fund budget by a total of \$1,742,290, and increase the Utilities Fund budget by a total of \$104,165. He said the reason the adjustments are so great is that there were several multi-year projects underway during this fiscal year.

Councilwoman Price moved, seconded by Councilwoman Clyburn and unanimously approved that the ordinance amending the budget for fiscal year 1996-97 be passed on first reading and second reading and public hearing be set for the next regular meeting of City Council.

SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Agreement

Contract

SPCA

Animals

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council needed to consider renewal of the contract with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA).

Mr. Thompson stated for some time, the staff has been meeting with the representatives of the Aiken Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) to amend the contract and agreement between the City and the ASPCA. The city contracts with the ASPCA to house and dispose of animals collected by the city's animal control officer.

Mr. Thompson stated there are minor changes in the contract, but the primary change is with the fees. The fees have not been adjusted in the past eight years, and after discussing this with the ASPCA, the staff is recommending the following fees:

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Survey of Other Vets</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Small Dogs/Cats (under 50#)	\$6.00	\$ 7.50 (less than 20#)	\$ 7.25
Large Dogs (over 50#)	8.00	10.00	10.00

The new fees seem to be reasonable, and the ASPCA does help the city tremendously by housing and taking care of the animals picked up by the city.

Councilman Anaclerio moved, seconded by Councilman Radford and unanimously approved, that the proposed agreement with the ASPCA for quarantining and boarding of animals from or found within the corporate limits of the City of Aiken be approved.

BIDS

Water Treatment Chemicals Chemicals Public Works Department

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council needed to consider the bids for the purchase of water treatment chemicals.

Mr. Thompson stated each year the city accepts bids for the purchase of chemicals in the water treatment operations. Bids have been received and the staff is recommending acceptance of the low bid for chemicals with one exception.

A total of 22 bid invitations were sent out, and 11 responses were received. The staff is recommending acceptance of the low bid for sodium fluoride, lime, liquid alum, and chlorine as follows:

<u>Vendor</u>	<u>Chemical</u>	<u>Total Price</u>
IndChem	Sodium Fluoride	\$23,940
IndChem	Lime	47,060
Suffolk Sales	Liquid Alum	30,475
Van Waters & Rogers	Chlorine	16,400

The staff is recommending that Council not accept the low bid for zinc orthophosphate. Although SouthChem provided the low bid, the staff found that the material bid by SouthChem is a zinc chloride based material. Presently the city uses a zinc sulfate based material, and the company was not able to assure us that the zinc chloride based material would not upset our distribution system with possible lead and copper rule violations and red water complaints. The city uses zinc orthophosphate to coat the pipes and reduce the amount of rust and corrosion that is released into the water to avoid red water complaints. The staff's concern is that a change in formula would release more rust into the water and defeat the purpose of the zinc orthophosphate.

Therefore, the staff is recommending that the city stay with the present supplier, Keystone Chemical, at a price of \$156 per 30 gal. drum. Keystone submitted the second low bid on the purchase. SouthChem's bid was \$153.72 per 30 gal. drum.

Councilman Perry moved, seconded by Councilwoman Papouchado and unanimously approved that Council accept a 12 month contract for the purchase of chemicals for the city's water treatment operations accepting the low bidders as recommended by the staff and the second low bidder, Keystone, for zinc orthophosphate.

AIKEN 20/20 CORPORATION

Economic Development
Request for Funds
Aiken Youth Correction Center
Industrial Parks
Airport
Terminal Building

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council needed to consider a proposed request to the Aiken 20/20 Corporation for funds for economic development activities.

Mr. Thompson stated that for some time City Council has discussed requesting funding from the Aiken 20/20 fund raiser for economic development activities. He said several projects are included in the submittal.

Mr. Thompson stated that for the past year the city has been working with the Corps of Engineers and other groups involved in the Aiken Youth Correction Center site, to have the structures and asbestos removed from the site. City Council has approved a bid for the cleanup process in the amount of about \$250,000, and we are looking for ways to pay for this project. City Council has discussed submitting a request to the Aiken 20/20 Corporation to help with the cleanup costs, and the Mayor has suggested that we move forward with the development of an application to the Aiken 20/20 Board.

The AYCC site is unattractive and the site discourages further development in the area around the Aiken Municipal Airport. Highway 1 is probably the most attractive entranceway into Aiken and is a major entranceway from Columbia and from I-20. The city has many improvement projects underway in this area, including the new landscaping at the intersection of Highway 1 and I-20, but the presence of the existing structures definitely hurts us when we try to sell industrial sites at the city's industrial parks. The staff is suggesting that City Council include funding in the amount of \$300,000 for cleanup of the AYCC site, as an important economic development project.

Mr. Thompson stated the city has efforts underway to develop additional acreage at the airport complex called Ventures Industrial Park and Aviation Business Park and a portion of Verenes Industrial Park. Under the study developed through Wilbur Smith Associates, we have costs for the development of these parks, including the installation of entrance roads and water and sewer service into these parks. Although the Aiken 20/20 fund raiser will not generate enough money to pay for the full development of these parks, the city could provide the match to make up the difference for these costs. For Ventures and Aviation parks, we have included a total amount of \$600,000.

Mr. Thompson stated the General Aviation Commission has discussed construction of a new terminal building at the airport to emphasize the airport as an economic development tool and to improve the entranceway into Aiken. We have estimated the total expense for a new terminal building at approximately \$600,000, and are hoping to obtain state funding in the amount of \$300,000. Our suggestion to City Council is that the terminal building request be funded at \$300,000 from Aiken 20/20.

Mr. Thompson stated these projects are all important economic development issues, and certainly merit funding by the Aiken 20/20 fund raiser.

Mr. Thompson stated the process if Council approves the request is to submit the application through the Aiken 20/20 Corporation which includes a review by the Aiken Corporation and the Economic Development Partnership with both providing a recommendation to Aiken 20/20.

Mayor Cavanaugh stated he had attended an Aiken 20/20 Corporation board meeting a few weeks ago and talked briefly to the board about Council's intentions of submitting a request for funds for economic development projects.

Councilman Perry moved, seconded by Councilwoman Price, that Council approve submittal of a request for \$1.2 million to the Aiken 20/20 Corporation to fund major economic development projects at the airport complex as reviewed by Mr. Thompson. The motion was approved by a vote of 6 in favor with Councilman Papouchado opposed.

BEST FRIEND EXPRESSDial-A-RideBus

Mayor Cavanaugh stated a request had been received for funding for the Dial-A-Ride/Best Friend Express.

Mr. Thompson stated City Council has received a request from the Aiken Area Council on Aging, asking that the city continue funding of the Dial-A-Ride service and the transportation system in Aiken County. The city has funded the Dial-A-Ride/Best Friend Express for several years since the County has taken on the system.

Lynnda Bassham, Aiken Area Council on Aging Director, pointed out in the information to Council that the Dial-A-Ride/Best Friend Express service assists with transportation needs in the community. Over the past few years, the routes of the Best Friend Express have been substantially expanded in Aiken and in the areas around the City of Aiken. She pointed out that 22% of the riders on the Best Friend Express are either elderly or have a disability, and the Dial-A-Ride enrollment has grown to over 200 riders this year. Last year the federal funding for the transit system decreased, and City Council increased funding from \$11,000 to a total of \$15,000.

George Alexander, of the Council on Aging, was present to answer any questions. Answering a question from Councilman Anaclerio, Mr. Alexander stated he understands the funding level from Aiken County will be about \$52,000 up from \$45,000 last year. Mr. Alexander pointed out at this time Aiken County has not adopted the budget, but there has been no indication that the transportation system will not be funded. He pointed out the rider figures for the Dial-A-Ride have been up for the past year. Figures for the Best Friend Express are up 26% for fiscal year 1997 and up nearly 50% for fiscal year 1996 over the previous year. He said the increases reflect the realignment of routing and establishing routes serving the valley area and the City of Aiken. The rerouting has been a tremendous help in improving access to the system and more convenient for riders to get to jobs, medical facilities and shopping areas. Mr. Alexander pointed out that local funding is matched by federal funds and state funds. He said the more dollars a community puts into the system, the more federal and state funds are available. Mr. Alexander stated a transportation network in Aiken County had been established in an effort to reduce duplication of service and to save taxpayer dollars and seems to be working. Mr. Alexander pointed out a rider from the Dial-A-Ride and a rider from the Best Friend Express were present to make comments to Council about the bus service.

Mayor Cavanaugh stated he felt the transportation service was needed in the county, and he felt the Council on Aging was doing a good job with the service. He felt it was a service needed in the All-America community to provide rides for persons in the community who do not have transportation.

Councilwoman Papouchado stated she wondered if Aiken County would include the transportation service in their budget since they have not completed their budget at this time. She pointed out the city had funded \$20,000 for the purchase of an ambulance for Aiken Rescue assuming that Aiken County would also contribute to the purchase, but Aiken County did not come through with funding. She wondered if the city wanted to commit funds before Aiken County makes a decision on committing funds to the bus service.

Councilman Anaclerio stated he had always supported the Dial-A-Ride/Best Friend Express, but he felt the citizens of Aiken are citizens of Aiken County and the county has a responsibility for this service. He felt the request for the city's continued support would result in requests for increased amounts.

Mr. Alexander pointed out the request for \$15,000 was the same request as last year.

Council asked that the citizens who use the bus service make comments to Council if they wished.

Mrs. Jo Feinstein stated she lives in the Croft House, and she takes the Best Friend Express at least two to three times a week and so do others who live in the Croft House. She pointed out there are many people who do not have transportation.

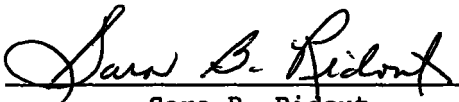
Ms. Liz Lewis stated she is a daily rider of the Dial-A-Ride. She stated she is visually impaired and can't drive. She stated she works for the Commission for the Blind and the Dial-A-Ride makes it possible for her to get to work and home each day. She pointed out a lot of the clients of the Commission for the Blind also use the bus system.

Councilwoman Clyburn stated she felt the bus service was necessary and that Council should support it.

Councilwoman Price moved, seconded by Mayor Cavanaugh, that Council approve the request for \$15,000 for support of the Dial-A-Ride/Best Friend Express. The motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 3. In favor of the motion were: Mayor Cavanaugh and Councilmembers Clyburn, Papouchado and Price. Opposed were Councilmembers Anaclerio, Perry and Radford.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 P.M.


Sara B. Ridout
City Clerk