

City of New Ellenton
Regular Meeting of City Council
City Hall Council Chambers
Minutes

Tuesday, January 20, 2009

Welcome

Mayor Vernon Dunbar called the meeting to order at approximately 7:08 pm.

Invocation

Terence Williams

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call for the Record

Eartha Rodgers, Terence Williams, Vernon Dunbar, Debbie Maddox

Others Present

City Clerk Vernel Sanders, City Administrator L.C. Greene, Recreation Director Donald Perry, Police Chief Johnny Hamilton, Mike Simmons, Vicki Simmons, Gene Smith, inaudible, Jackie Keenan, Kelly Keenan, T.D. Sharpe, Dick Brancato, Doris Bing, Earl Valentine, Alice Mercer, Annette Dickerson, Catherine Lewis

Mayor Dunbar again welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Approval of Financial Statements

December 2008: *Motion to approve the November 2008 Financial Statement by Councilman Williams, second by Councilwoman Maddox. All in favor. Approved.*

Approval of Council Minutes

Regular Council Meeting November 17, 2008: *Motion to approve the November 17, 2008 Regular Council Meeting minutes by Councilwoman Rodgers, second by Mayor Dunbar. 2 in favor. Approved with Councilman Williams and Councilwoman Maddox abstaining due to not being present.*

Special Council Meeting November 25, 2008: *Motion to approve the November 25, 2008 Special Council Meeting minutes by Councilwoman Rodgers, second by Councilwoman Maddox. All in favor. Approved.*

Special Council Meeting December 10, 2008: *Motion to approve the December 10, 2008 Special Council Meeting minutes by Councilwoman Maddox, second by Councilwoman*

Rodgers. 3 in favor. Approved with Councilman Williams abstaining due to not being present.

Old Business

New Business

Consideration of approval of employee job descriptions Mayor Dunbar stated, with City Administrator Greene concurring, that in the last month the job descriptions had been presented and now needed to be adopted. Several Council members stated that they had not received copies. City Administrator Greene stated that everyone had been provided copies of the job descriptions and wage and compensation information. Mayor Dunbar stated that they were received two or three months ago and said that someone had come and presented the information in November or December. City Administrator Greene stated that the presenter had gone over pay scale and compensation plan with the job descriptions. Mayor Dunbar added that the presenter went over his methods of developing the figures. Mayor Dunbar asked if Council wanted to vote to adopt them or not. Councilwoman Maddox stated that she wanted to hold off and did not have the paperwork in front of her. *Motion to table adoption of job descriptions by Councilwoman Maddox, second by Councilman Williams. 3 in favor. Approved with Mayor Dunbar opposed.*

Consideration of a Business License for F & L's Restaurant Mayor Dunbar stated that Alice Mercer and her sisters are opening a restaurant in town and asked them to say a few words. Ms. Mercer greeted everyone and stated that the restaurant would be located where Tru Divine was with a planned opening date of mid-February. Ms. Mercer continued that the hours would be 5:00 – 8:00 serving soul food. City Administrator Greene asked for clarification on the name. Ms. Mercer responded that the name would be F & L's. *Motion to approve business license for F & L's Restaurant by Councilwoman Rodgers, second by Councilwoman Maddox. All in favor. Approved.* An unidentified individual asked if F & L's would do deliveries, and Ms. Mercer affirmed.

Report from Police Chief

Chief Johnny Hamilton stated that for the month of December the Police Department had issued 348 case numbers of which 158 had been dispositioned in Municipal Court. Chief Hamilton stated that two more junk cars had been removed in the last month and a completion date for one more house. City Clerk Sanders asked about an old trailer on Long Street that appeared to have burned. An unidentified individual responded that it was being torn down. Mayor Dunbar stated that to get rid of them you have to dismantle them.

Report from Fire Chief

Mayor Dunbar stated that the Fire Chief was not present and asked if anyone could report for the Fire Chief. Councilwoman Rodgers stated that she does not have anything other than the Fire Department banquet last Saturday was very nice and enjoyable.

Report from Recreation Director

Mr. Perry stated that in order to upgrade the facilities and get children back into the program is greatly needed. Mr. Perry furthered that the ballpark has been in the same shape for many years and the upgrades would attract softball and baseball tournaments through Dixie to help offset some of the costs. Mr. Perry also stated that he has gotten blocks donated for the concession stand and bathrooms, but needs someone to lay the blocks. Mr. Perry stated that Councilman Williams would be talking to someone and three bids have already been brought in. Mr. Perry stated that all of the fields need bases, home plates, and pitchers mound and that a decent drag is needed to remove grass from the infields. Mr. Perry stated that he has also been working with Aiken Electric and for approximately \$295.00 per month for a year the lights could be put in with the City only paying for the equipment not the labor. Mr. Perry stated that Wilson and Associates will put down chalk and the bases at the correct distances and the fields would be ready to play on. Mr. Perry stated that he had another bid from another person which is cheaper, but that additional work would be needed after the fact. Mr. Perry stated that insurance cost for 15 teams covering players, coaches, volunteers and fans and is the proper Dixie insurance would be \$1,483.20. Mr. Perry stated that if the program only has ten teams, Sadler Insurance will refund the difference. Mayor Dunbar asked when the insurance needs to be paid. Mr. Perry stated before the kids hit the field. Mayor Dunbar asked when that is. Mr. Perry responded that registration was ongoing and the State Meeting would be Valentine's Day in Columbia and that practice usually begins the Monday after. Mr. Perry continued that most kids do not come out until practice starts. An unidentified individual asked when sign-ups had begun. Mr. Perry replied that they had begun a week ago. The woman stated that she did not know. Mr. Perry responded that it had not been on the board yet, but had been in the newspaper. The woman asked if sign-ups were at City Hall. Mr. Perry affirmed. The woman asked how much the cost was per child. Mr. Perry responded that baseball and softball would be \$50.00 and teeball would be \$40.00. Mr. Perry replied that softball and teeball had seen an increase because the same amount of money is being paid to the officials. An unidentified individual asked if it could be put on the sign outside to let people know. Mr. Perry replied that it would go up in the morning. Mayor Dunbar added that there were other things that had to go up on the board. Mr. Perry stated that it had been run in the paper and should be on next month's sanitation bill. Mr. Perry stated that it had been in the paper for two weeks. Inaudible. Mr. Perry stated that the bid was \$46,912.00. An unidentified individual asked about the work. Mr. Perry stated that the baseball field would be reshaped, new plates, new bases, and scoreboard. The unidentified woman asked if it was an electronic scoreboard. Mr. Perry responded that it was manual which was the least expensive he could find. Mr. Perry stated that the softball field would get rubbers, bases, and scoreboard. Mayor Dunbar asked for the prices as the projects are discussed. Mr. Perry stated that for baseball it would be \$5,000.00 and stated that the Pony League field was included with that, but could be made into the teeball field. Mr. Perry stated that the teeball field is the most work including taking up grass, adding fencing and having Aiken Electric come out for a total of \$40,000.00. Mr. Perry stated that the softball field would be \$1,000.00. Mr. Perry stated that he thinks that Evans Park if needed could be done for \$512.00. An unidentified individual asked if the lights were what cost \$40,000.00. Mr. Perry replied that it included lights, fencing, taking up grass and making it regulation. An unidentified

individual asked which field it is. Mr. Perry responded that it is the teeball field. An unidentified person asked if it was behind the school. Mr. Perry affirmed, and the woman stated that the teeball field is in bad shape. An unidentified person asked if the City needs four fields with only 15 teams. Mr. Perry replied that Pony League is a different distance than baseball. The unidentified person stated that the fields are not different, just the fencing. Mr. Perry disagreed stating that the base path lengths are different. An unidentified person added that the pitching distances are different as well, and Mr. Perry affirmed. Mr. Perry again stated that the teeball field was the most work because it lacks 125 feet to be a regulation baseball or softball field. Mr. Perry continued that taking down the existing fence would not be worth it because taking them out would tear them up and the backstop requires special 10 gauge fencing to protect the fans. Mr. Perry stated that Boyd Fencing wanted \$21,000.00 for the fencing alone. An unidentified person asked if it included dugouts. Mr. Perry responded that the dugouts on the softball and baseball fields are in good shape, and the softball field needs the least work. Mr. Perry continued that Dixie Baseball and Softball assured him that the City could host tournaments if there are three lighted fields. Mayor Dunbar asked City Administrator Greene to see if there are any grants to help with these projects. Mr. Perry added that a Work Day is being scheduled and any help would be appreciated. Mayor Dunbar stated that an exact day needs to be set. Mr. Perry stated that it would be the 31st. Councilman Williams asked about the year volunteer umpires got certified. Mr. Perry stated that the next year they went to Aiken and Jackson and got paid. Mr. Perry continued that fans get irate when there are bad games called. Mayor Dunbar stated that he thought money should be saved, but he did not think it should be on umpires, because it is a point of contention. Mayor Dunbar continued that there is controversy with qualified umpires. Mr. Perry agreed.

Report from Committees

Administration

Fire Department

Police Department

Streets and Roads and Parks Councilwoman Rodgers stated that she does not have anything other than the sewer being backed up on Coffee Street. Councilman Williams asked for it to be noted that there is a light out on Long Street on the curb.

Sewer and Sanitation Councilwoman Maddox stated that other than the incident on Coffee Street there was nothing else. Councilwoman Maddox stated that the sewer had backed up in to some home basements. Mayor Dunbar stated that the plumbing has been remedied, but the damage at the house has not been, so the family has not been able to get back in the house. Mayor Dunbar stated that he had been working with the City insurers and the family with their homeowner's insurer to remedy the situation.

Recreation Councilman Williams and Councilwoman Maddox stated that they did not have anything.

Technology Center Mayor Dunbar stated that he did not have anything new to report. Mayor Dunbar stated that during the budget work session, the Technology Center was a concern and that the City was looking to get out of that lease. Mayor Dunbar stated that the leaseholders are not willing to let the City out of the lease, so the City would be contacting the City attorney.

Mayor Dunbar stated that under Administration, Council had a budget meeting and identified several areas to cut, including the Technology Center. Mayor Dunbar continued that the Sewer plant operator would be going from \$750.00 to \$550.00 per week and asked the police to be mindful of fuel consumption including idling for long periods of time. Mayor Dunbar continued that each department must examine overtime and spending. Mayor Dunbar stated that another budget work session is needed and asked for a good date. Discussion of schedules. Mayor Dunbar scheduled the next budget meeting for January 27, 2009 at 6:00 pm.

Mayor Dunbar asked for anything else and opened it to the audience. Mr. Smith asked how far out of budget was the City. Mayor Dunbar stated that it really was not known, but that the major area of concern was the Technology Center not performing as expected. Mr. Smith stated that it was about an \$80,000.00 deficit. Mayor Dunbar stated that it was at least that. City Clerk Sanders stated that the budget is not so much out of balance as it is a realization of the cuts going on around the state and the cut in revenue from the state. Inaudible.

Councilwoman Rodgers stated that yesterday a shooting incident occurred in front of her house, and even with the lack of officers, she requested Milion Avenue be patrolled a little more. Councilwoman Rodgers continued that it was three teenagers and the man in the car that was being shot at had not been hit, but the back windshield had been shot out.

Mr. Sharpe stated that Cedar Creek would free up any patrols to go to Councilwoman Rodgers's house as Cedar Creek is patrolled by the County. Mr. Sharpe continued that the gates to the Sewer plant had been open, and as Cedar Creek pays \$50,000.00 to \$60,000.00 a year in fees that eventually go to Sewer, he entered the Sewer facility. Mr. Sharpe continued that he has degree in Chemical Engineering and had operated for two years the largest private wastewater plant in Wisconsin. Mr. Sharpe continued that he had looked at ponds, forest mains, lift stations and sludge presses, and in his opinion as a resident of Cedar Creek, at the last annual meeting there were comments made about the conditions of the sewer system including whether the aeration ponds are operating and whether the person who tracks the sewer main runs is still around and can the runs be found. Mr. Sharpe continued that most importantly, if the development by Keystone happens, can the sewer system handle it. Mr. Sharpe assured that he was not trying to be elitist, but as a chemical engineer and by visual inspection, there are DHEC violations. Mr. Sharpe furthered that there was water/fire hydrants that are potable within 40 feet of the first aeration pond which is a strict DHEC violation. Mayor Dunbar asked to interrupt and stated that DHEC had just inspected the sewer plant and the results had been received in the last week. Mayor Dunbar continued that everything had checked out fine and satisfactory. Mayor Dunbar continued that Cedar Creek is not on the City sewer and

stated that Cedar Creek pays CPW for water, but is not on the City sewer. Mr. Sharpe stated that he had been to CPW meetings and asked why Cedar Creek was paying 50% more and was told some of it was to pay for the repayment of the bond. Mayor Dunbar stated that it was for the CPW bond. Mr. Sharpe stated that he could turn the pictures over to DHEC. Mayor Dunbar told Mr. Sharpe to feel free to. Mr. Sharpe stated that he knows Tom Vittles on the Board that makes the approval and asked if that was correct. Mayor Dunbar stated that he did not know, but stated that DHEC sent the report. Mayor Dunbar asked if Tom Vittles inspects the City sewer plant. Mr. Sharpe replied that he does not, but told Mayor Dunbar that he should go out and take a look at the container under the sludge press which he felt would fall apart and at the lift station that is so overgrown with weeds he would not pay the operator \$250.00 per week. Mayor Dunbar stated that if Mr. Sharpe were a DHEC inspector it would matter, but that DHEC had come out and inspected and given the facility a passing grade. Mayor Dunbar continued that there had not been a failing grade since he had been mayor. Mayor Dunbar continued that it was unreasonable for Mr. Sharpe to say that the facility was inadequate. Mr. Sharpe stated that he was not saying the facility was inadequate, but just that there are torn liners in two of the aeration ponds and that the aerators are not working in two of the ponds. Mr. Sharpe continued that the forest main is leaking and standing sewage water can be seen in the woods. Mayor Dunbar stated that none of those had been cited by the DHEC inspector.

Mr. Valentine asked if there was any way to deal with the abandoned buildings and cleaning up personal property. Mr. Valentine continued that a house on Jackson and Harlem had been stripped out and nothing else has been done. Police Chief Hamilton stated that it is being worked on, but he is not sure what happened. An unidentified person asked about one across from her mother. Police Chief Hamilton stated that anyone interested can come in and he can show them the file on the property.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Councilwoman Rodgers, second by Councilwoman Maddox. All in favor. Approved.