



**CITY OF SUMMERVILLE
SPECIAL CALLED
COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 24, 2021
5:30 p.m.**

CALLED TO ORDER: Mayor Harvey called the special called meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Mayor Harry Harvey gave roll call. Council Members David Ford, Dana W. Mosley, Kristy L. Dennis, Joe Money, Jr., and Zachary Martin were present. City Manager Janice Galloway was also present. City Attorney Albert Palmour was absent.

INVOCATION: Mayor Harvey gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Council Member Joe Money, Jr. led the pledge of allegiance.

AGENDA: Mayor Harvey asked if any additions or deletions are needed to the meeting agenda. With no changes requested, Council Member Joe Money, Jr. made a motion to approve the meeting agenda. The motion was seconded by Council Member Dana W. Mosley and carried unanimously.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS: Mayor Harvey welcomed guests to the special called budget meeting. Mayor Harvey announced things are looking much better concerning COVID cases, but everyone needs to remain vigilant. In addition, Mayor Harvey reported information had been received concerning the American Rescue Plan. If anyone is interested, there will be additional webinars forthcoming.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Mayor Harvey asked for questions or comments.

JASON ESPY: Jason Espy with *The Summerville News* asked for clarification on the water rate increase. Jason asked how the water rate increase would affect a customer that has minimum usage. City Manager Janice Galloway stated, "\$2.00." Jason asked who will see the most increase. City Manager Galloway stated, "Over 2,000 gallons is \$4.29 per thousand, the outside water will be \$5.59 per thousand. Jason asked if the sewer would be going up as well. City Manager Galloway stated, "The sewer is 135% of the water used." City Manager Galloway explained the rate for inside sewer is \$27.96 and \$34.75 for outside sewer. Jason asked if gas rates will remain the same. Mayor Harvey stated, "Yes." Jason asked if garbage rates are up. Mayor Harvey replied garbage rates are the same as last year.

Jason questioned if having a full-time building inspector was worth the associated cost. Mayor Harvey explained we are expecting some increase in revenues, but the main purpose is to make sure building codes are being followed. Jason asked if the salary and benefits for the position total \$60,000. Mayor Harvey replied I have not looked at the exact cost, but benefits usually run from \$17,000 to \$20,000. Council Member Joe Money, Jr. explained it is a customer issue for him, having access to someone available during business hours to go onsite. It has been an issue over the last ten years with citizens not being able to contact the building inspector. Council Member Kristy L. Dennis interjected, stating, contractors too.

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Jason asked if a part-time inspector could work during the day instead of working full-time. Mayor Harvey stated, "That is a possibility. However, if you have someone full-time, they are on duty or call." Council Member Kristy L. Dennis explained her issue is in the wintertime, it gets dark at 4:00 p.m., and the current Inspector does not get off from his full-time job until 5:00 p.m., and contractors have already gone home. Council Member Dennis noted we need to take a lot of things into consideration, with either the full-time or part-time position. Jason asked if the city would be able to find someone to do the job for \$40,000. Mayor Harvey stated, "That will be one of the challenges. We can look at adjustments. You need to have someone certified, and that is familiar with the codes."

CITY MANAGER: City Manager Janice Galloway reported a balance of \$2,275,964.73 in the operating account as of May 21, 2021. City Manager Galloway reported \$1,304,897.63 has been spent on the water issue as of this date.

NEW BUSINESS

SOLICITATION OF A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL(RFP) FOR AN EMERGENCY STAND BY GENERATOR FOR THE WATER TREATMENT PLANT: Mayor Harvey stated the first item of business is to approve the solicitation of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an emergency stand by generator for the water treatment plant. Mayor Harvey explained that the water treatment plant generator is currently leased, and discussion has taken place about purchasing a generator. Council Member Joe Money, Jr. asked if a generator has been located. City Manager Janice Galloway explained we are asking for permission to advertise for bids. Purchasing Director Trey Goble explained an RFP has been prepared, and with approval, it will be advertised. Council Member Kristy L. Dennis asked how long it will run in the paper. Trey stated, "Twice, and the RFP will be open for 30 days." Council Member Dana W. Mosley asked how much the current monthly lease is. Water Treatment Plant Operator Jason Greene stated, "\$1,000 a month and during hurricane season it can go up. Council Member Kristy L. Dennis asked if they could come and get it at any time. Jason stated, "They can get it at any time." Council Member David Ford made a motion to approve the Request for Proposal (RFP) for an emergency standby generator for the water treatment plant. Council Member Kristy L. Dennis seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

ESO SOFTWARE: Mayor Harvey stated the next item of business is to consider approving the purchase of ESO Software for \$5,355 to be paid in two payments. The first payment will be \$4,355 paid in FYE 2021 budget and the remaining \$1,000 in FYE 2022. Mayor Harvey requested Fire Chief Robbie Lathem to provide more information. Robbie explained the previous software was restricted to one system. The proposed ESO software is Cloud-based, and it covers training activities, incidents, fire hydrants, and pre-plans. It covers four training modules, and once it is installed, the information will be backed up, and it will also report to Governmental fire calls. Mayor Harvey asked if there was an annual cost associated with the software. Trey explained \$2,975 recurring annually, and it covers licensing costs and cloud base solutions. However, the benefits are being able to utilize it in the field and data back-up. Council Member David Ford made a motion to approve the purchase of ESO Software in the amount of \$5,355. Mayor Pro Tem Zachary Martin seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

RAW WATER PUMP #3 REPAIR – WATER TREATMENT PLANT: Mayor Harvey stated approval is needed for payment to R&W Contractors, Inc. for repairs to raw water pump #3 at the water treatment plant for \$8,601.85. Council Member David Ford made a motion to approve payment of \$8,601.85 to R&W Contractors for repair to raw water pump #3. Council Member Kristy L. Dennis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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DISCUSS FY 2021-2022 BUDGET: Mayor Harvey stated the next item of business is to discuss the FY 2021-2022 budget. Mayor Harvey explained this is the second budget work session, and if the budget is complete, it can be advertised for the first and second reading. Mayor Harvey requested the council review the revenue page. Mayor Harvey noted the water rate increase is included in the budget, and it will affect the sewer rate.

Mayor Harvey reported a 1.75% salary increase for employees Grade 22 and below, and a 1% increase for Grades 23 and above is included in the budget. Employees that were classified as a 9,10, and 11 were all moved to a Grade 12. Mayor Harvey stated another pay plan is needed, the current pay plan is old, and it needs to be done every five to six years. Council Member Dana W. Mosley asked how much part-time patrol officers make. Finance Director Carla Rutledge stated, "The officers make \$14.00, with the exception of one employee that was prior to the pay plan that makes more." Council Member Mosley commented since part-time officers do not receive benefits, they should make more. Mayor Harvey explained a comparison needs to be made between the pay of full-time and part-time officers. Council Member Kristy L. Dennis asked if officers leave due to pay. Council Member David Ford stated, "The last two were due to health." Council Member Joe Money, Jr. stated, "In that position, skilled folks are needed." Council Member Money commented whatever we need to do to get the best people in that position, we need to do it. Council Member Money noted Carla had provided pay information from surrounding areas, and it seems we are spot on. City Manager Janice Galloway reported the current rate is \$16.11 to \$16.97 plus a vehicle, and the new rate would be \$16.95 to \$17.86 plus a vehicle. Mayor Harvey commented that this could be looked at later, but increasing pay does not always keep people.

Mayor Harvey reported a full-time building inspector is included in the budget. Mayor Harvey explained the full-time position is more about service than money, and with the full-time Inspector, the expectation is to have more money coming in, but it is not one of our enterprise operations.

Mayor Harvey stated the Natural Gas Connection (NGC) program and the new Regulatory Compliance Tech II position are included in the budget. Mayor Harvey explained he requested the NGC program be listed as a line item in the budget. Mayor Harvey explained this had been discussed previously, but they were asking for \$140,000 per year, and it has been reduced. Mayor Harvey stated it is about providing services for customers, to grow and keep from declining, and we need to provide customers with services. Council Member Kristy L. Dennis asked if this should be a topic to be voted on. Mayor Harvey stated, "You can. The last time it came up, it did not get a second." Council Member Dennis asked if this could be listed as a line item without being voted on. Mayor Harvey stated, "Yes, I can put things in. The budget has not been voted on. It can be pulled out" Mayor Harvey explained we need to market our gas, and as a line item, it can be tracked. Council Member Dennis asked how it will be tracked. Mayor Harvey explained that NGC can track the number of contracts, appliances sold, financing, rebates, and installation costs. They will also do advertising, offer a 24-hour hotline, and will work with new businesses and grants. Council Member Dana W. Mosley commented the last time we discussed this program, NGC wanted \$70,000. Council Member Mosley asked if NGC changed the price. Mayor Harvey stated, "Yes." Council Member Mosley stated, "We were not given that information." Council Member Mosley explained she is willing to listen to a proposal again, but it should not be a line item in the budget until we hear the proposal and vote. Council Member Joe Money, Jr. commented the Town of Trion was out on the program. They have sold 22 units in three years, and all but three of them were to Summerville customers.

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Council Member Money stated, "On March 8, this was discussed, a motion was made to join the contract, and it didn't get a second. That is plain enough. It was rejected. We don't want to do it." Council Member David Ford asked, what are we going to do, stay stagnant? Council Member Ford stated, "We've got to do something." Council Member Mosley stated, "I am willing to listen to him again. They never marketed the pilot, so we don't have any data." Council Member Kristy L. Dennis stated, "We are on gas, and we usually go to Lowe's because we get zero percent interest on our credit cards, and they will install it." Mayor Harvey commented if Lowe's is an easier process than what he had to do, he would like to see it. Council Member David Ford stated, "The biggest thing is not necessarily the appliances. You've got to find a way to keep customers." Council Member Ford stated, "It is a fact. We are losing customers." Mayor Harvey explained we can do it for a year, year and a half, we can track it. If we are not getting our money's worth, we can take it out. We need to doing something to increase or at least maintain our gas sales. Council Member Dana W. Mosley stated, "I think it needs to be removed until we have more information or we vote again." Mayor Harvey explained we could leave it in the budget in contingency and listen to the proposal again. If we decide not to do it, we don't do it. Mayor Harvey stated I would rather have it in there so we can move forward. Council Member Joe Money, Jr. stated, "I can't figure out why it is in here period." Mayor Harvey stated, "I put it in there." Council Member Money stated, "You shouldn't have. We spoke, and we didn't want to do it."

NATURAL GAS CONNECTION PROGRAM: Council Member Joe Money, Jr. requested a vote to determine if the NGC program would remain in the budget as a line item. Council Member David Ford made a motion to leave the NGC program in the budget as a line item. Mayor Pro Tem Zachary Martin seconded the motion. The motion failed 3 to 2. Council Member Dana W. Mosley, Council Member Kristy L. Dennis, and Council Member Joe Money, Jr. voted in opposition.

Council Member Joe Money, Jr reported some of the playground equipment in Dowdy Park is in foul shape. Council Member Money asked City Manager Janice Galloway if there was anything that could be done. City Manager Galloway explained someone is coming to look at replacing the edging and grading. Also, there are two places on the grading that looks like it is going to fall through. We are going to get someone to weld a plate until we hear from the manufacture.

Mayor Harvey asked if any changes were needed to SPLOST. Mayor Harvey asked for questions or any other changes that need to be made.

City Manager Janice Galloway requested input from the Council on how to disburse the \$50,453 from the NGC line item that will be removed from the budget. City Manager Galloway explained it would need to be moved into gas contingency or water contingency. Council Member Kristy L. Dennis stated, "It could be put into the gas contingency, and it will be there later. Mayor Harvey stated, "Gas contingency would be better." Mayor Harvey noted if it is put into gas contingency, it will not change the budget, and the schedule can remain the same for advertisements.

Mayor Harvey asked for questions concerning the water and sewer rate increase included in the budget. Council Member Dana W. Mosley asked if the water and sewer rate increase included in the budget resulted from the rate increase approved in the previous budget. Mayor Harvey stated, "Yes." Council Member Kristy L. Dennis asked about discounts for disabled residents. Mayor Harvey stated, "We have not done the discounts. That was not proposed in this budget." Mayor Harvey explained discounts need to be considered at some point, but we are not out of the woods yet as far as water & gas. However, we are looking much better than we were a year ago.

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Mayor Harvey asked for questions from visitors or Council. Council Member Kristy L. Dennis asked if we have any idea when the discounts for the disabled will start. City Manager Janice Galloway stated, "I would like to get further into the new water system to see how much we are going to have to put into it. We have already spent 1.3 million, and we are nowhere close to the wells with the transmission line, and the wells have not been put into production yet." City Manager Galloway explained we should have more information by mid-year. Also, we already offer a discount on garbage rates so we know the people it will affect. Council Member Dana W. Mosley commented it would be easier at mid-year to do it instead of talking about it.

ADJOURN: With all business concluded, Council Member Dana W. Mosley made a motion to adjourn. Council Member Kristy L Dennis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor Harvey requested Council to review the 2019 City Manager report. Mayor Harvey explained as we begin to open back up, and we need to begin looking at projects that need to be done.

HARRY HARVEY – MAYOR

Attest:

ANGIE WHITE – CITY CLERK