

**CITY OF DARLINGTON
BUDGET WORK SESSION
TUESDAY- MAY 9, 2017 AT 6:00 PM**

The City of Darlington held a Budget Work Session in the Old Council Chambers on Monday, May 9, 2017 at 6:00 PM. Present at the meeting: Mayor Gloria C. Hines, City Manager Howard Garland; Council Members: Carolyn Bruce, John Segars, Elaine Reed, John Milling and Bryant Gardner. Others in attendance included: Mr. Freddie Kinsaul, Ms. Katrina Ham,

Mayor Hines called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Mr. Garland said the first item for discussion is the mid-range 3-5-year planning document. Mr. Garland gave Council a few minutes to look over the document. Councilwoman Elaine Reed introduced Ms. Katrina Ham who appeared at the meeting along with Ms. Harkless. Councilwoman Reed said both young ladies told her they were going to come to the meeting since it was publicized on the board out front to discuss issues about the streets. Mayor Hines said the meeting is for the 2016-2017 long range planning and not exactly about the budget. Mayor Hines told Mr. Garland if the young ladies want to say something, they could go ahead. Ms. Katrina Ham who lives at 133 Jefferson Street said her street looks like the land of the lost. She said there are lots on her street that have not been cleaned in a long time. She said the trees on both sides of the street have grown into the street to the point that only one car can pass at a time. Ms. Ham said she called about empty houses on her street two years ago and was told they would send out notices and give the homeowners 10 days to reply not as of yet she hasn't heard anything. Ms. Ham said she came to City Hall and spoke with a gentleman and he got the lady on the speaker phone and she said no one has said anything about Jefferson Street. Ms. Ham also said she has trash that has been there for three weeks. She said a lady called her on the phone the other day and told her there was only one truck running and all the equipment is down. Ms. Ham said she's been a native of Darlington all her life and she loves her City and for their street to go neglected like that, something has to be done. She said it was two years ago when the lady told her to be patient with them, but two years is long enough to get in touch with the people that own the property. Ms. Ham said if the property owners are not going to do something about their property, they need to sell it and if they are not going to sell it, they need to turn it over to the City and let them

clean and then the City can get their money back. Mayor Hines said the cherry picker was broken for three weeks. They got it to working yesterday and it broke again yesterday. She said we're in the process now to try and get another cherry picker. Mayor Hines said we've got a new Inspector and a new Secretary in the Codes Enforcement Office. Ms. Ham wanted to know what's up with the one truck. She said they pay taxes and she can't believe there's one truck for the whole City. Mayor Hines asked Mr. Garland how much the trucks cost and he said \$150,000. Mayor Hines asked Ms. Ham how many houses do they need to send letters to. Ms. Ham didn't know the exact number, but Councilwoman Reed said there are seven houses on that street. Mr. Garland said the Building Inspector went out Friday and Monday to inspect the area. Ms. Ham said she plans to be at the June meeting and will continue to come back until something is done.

Ms. Harkless said she's at 308 Washington Street where the sinkhole is and wanted to know what we're doing about it. Mayor Hines said she asked Councilwoman Reed about this the other day and wanted to know if this is included in the storm drain project and Councilwoman Reed said that it is included.

Mr. Garland said one thing that's not on the list is the tablets he previously talked about. He wanted a consensus from Council as to their interest. Mr. Garland said we'll have to get some type of software to run with the tablets. Councilwoman Bruce and Councilman Gardner both said we could check with Ms. Diane Sigmon at the School District and she will be able to give him some advice on that. Mr. Garland said the School Board is paperless, but he wouldn't want to go completely paperless. Mr. Garland said the only problem he can see is if the Wi-Fi goes out here, which it does quite a bit. He said if we get some of the hotspots that will take care of that problem. He said he will move forward with that and try to find some type of software platform that supports that. All of Council agreed that tablets would be nice. Mr. Garland said Council will have to be reminded to bring their tablets to the meetings because we won't have paper documents.

Mr. Garland told Council he will only go over certain line items in the general fund budget if there were significant increases or decreases.

Mr. Kinsaul went over Personnel Services in the water and sewer budget. Mr. Garland reminded Council that we have a cash flow problem because we have reserves that are taken out each month. He said the small bond or

SRF is approximately \$18,000 per month and the large bond is \$181,000 annually. He said we've been very aggressive the last few years getting water & sewer grants and we need to take at least a year off and get our cash flow straightened out in that department. Mr. Garland said we've got to buy new equipment such as a new Vactor truck; we need to update the beds at the sewer treatment plant; the Joe Louis and Grove Hill lift stations need to be updated and the water tank at N. Main Street needs to be painted. He said we will shift our CDBG focus to the Fire Department in the fall for a new fire station. Mayor Hines asked if FEMA can help with the beds. Mr. Garland said we put in for mitigation funding for Allen Street Lift Station because that was the greatest need.

Councilwoman Bruce asked Mr. Kinsaul to walk her through the evaluation process and the pay scale for employees since he mentioned that he gave all of his employees a \$1.00 more per hour raise. Mr. Garland said because of the upcoming election and with all of the potential new people coming on, he felt the need to go ahead and give employees a sizeable increase. Councilwoman Bruce said she wants to know the process and if employees are evaluated based on performance. Mr. Kinsaul said they should be, but we don't do it. Mr. Garland said for one or two years evaluations were done, but it has not been done every year. He said everybody gets a cost-of-living increase in July of each year. Mr. Garland said if somebody comes upset or say they are leaving, then a raise is considered on a case-by-case basis. Councilman Gardner said this is something to consider for everybody. Councilwoman Reed wanted to know what the election had to do with Mr. Kinsaul giving his employees \$1.00 more per hour. Mr. Garland said depending on who became Mayor, it was stated there would be some "belt tightening" and there wouldn't be any raises for a while. Mayor Hines said we need evaluations in place. Mr. Garland started back going over line items in different departments in the budget.

Mr. Kinsaul started back with the water & sewer budget going over his operating expenses.

Mr. Garland said we've given the Chamber \$15,000 for Freedom Fest each year since it started and wanted to know Council's pleasure for this year. Councilman Segars said we should support Freedom Fest because it brings in a lot of people from all over. Mayor Hines said she went to the County Council meeting the other night and she was disturbed because when Mr. Steadman from the Chamber asked them for \$25,000, they didn't say

anything. She said she thinks they've given them \$2,700. All Council members agreed the City should give \$15,000 for Freedom Fest again this year. Council members also agreed that maybe we should mention something to County officials about giving more to support Freedom Fest. Mayor Hines said we need to call County Council and tell them to give and also challenge them to match what the City gives.

Mr. Garland said there will be a budget work session Tuesday May 23, 2017 at 6:15 PM.

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM.

Mayor

ATTEST:

Clerk & Treasurer