

CITY OF HARDEEVILLE
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
AND PUBLIC HEARINGS
MINUTES
AUGUST 27, 2009
6:00 PM

Present: Mayor Bronco Bostick, Mayor Pro Tem Roy Powell, Council Members A. Brooks Willis, Michael Foskey and Bill Horton, City Manager Kevin Griffin, Assistant City Manager Jeff Slocum, Planning Director Brana Snowden, Police Chief Richard Nagy, Assistant Police Chief Steve Murphy, Fire Chief Dan Morgan, Municipal Court Judge John Carroll, Economic Development Director Ted Felder, Finance Director Dennis Averkin, City Clerk Lori Pomarico, Media Technician Juan Singleton and Media Technician Brandon Sligh.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bronco Bostick called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member Brooks Willis gave the invocation

III. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS/COMMENTS (2 MINUTE TIME LIMIT)

Mr. Brad Samuels of SCANA Corporation presented a check in the amount of \$500 to the City of Hardeeville for the Catfish Festival.

Ms. Richie Reed and her sister, Ms. James Winifred Badger presented a framed copy of a news article dated March 1, 1953 titled "Negro School at Hardeeville, One of the Most Modern in South Carolina" which symbolizes their parents love for the people of Hardeeville to the Mayor and City Council. Ms. Reed stated that their father and others fought for a school building and they would be pleased about this moment. Mayor Bostick asked that Ms. Reed contact Ms. Kathleen Wilson of the Historical Society to find a place to display this article.

Mr. Brett Wetherington, Area Director with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, addressed the Council. Mr. Wetherington stated that they are partnering with a variety of schools in this area and they are looking to expand the opportunity to partner with different organizations in the Jasper County area. The FCA uses the vehicle of sports to be able to teach young people, who love sports, the value of integrity, teamwork, serving and excellence. The FCA has seen an enormous amount of success in the last two years in other areas and they want to focus on Hardeeville and the Jasper County area to continue that success.

Council Member Foskey commented that he was contacted personally by Mr. Wetherington regarding a contribution and stated that he supports and would like the City to support the FCA.

Mayor Bostick stated that he would have the City Manager get back to Mr. Wetherington within the next ten days regarding a contribution.

A. MYRA COLLINS – UNITED WAY

Ms. Myra Collins, Director of the Jasper County office of the United Way of the Lowcountry addressed the Council with a request for sponsorship funds to support the October 10th golf tournament at Tradition in Hardeeville to help raise funds for Jasper County. Ms. Collins explained that the United Way raises money to fund 39 agencies between Beaufort and Jasper Counties. Jasper County has four housed locally, the Senior Citizen Center where the United Way helps fund their meals; the Board of Disabilities and Special Needs; Beaufort/Jasper Comprehensive Health; and the Boys and Girls Club. Mayor Bostick responded that he would recommend to Council that \$1,500 be donated to the United Way of the Lowcountry. Council Member Horton thanked Ms. Collins for speaking to the people at the Senior Citizens Center recently and commented that the United Way does a great deal for the community.

Council Member Horton made a motion to present \$1,500 to the United Way as a sponsorship for the golf tournament. The motion received a proper second by Council Member Willis and carried unanimously.

B. PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES TO INTERNS

Mayor Bostick recognized the summer interns, Aaron Ager, Charles Dwight Brewer, CarMecca Garvin, Danyelle Golden, Brandon Nettles and Tasha Wilson. Mayor Bostick presented certificates to those that were present and thanked them for serving and hoped that whatever they learned about city government they take back to their schools, community and churches so that we can continue this program in years to come.

Council Member Horton commented that he is in and out of City Hall and all of the departments and every time he saw these young people they were working hard. It goes to show how the community, the City, the government, all of us pulling together can accomplish great things. These young people did a great service to the City, they helped out a lot over the summer, and we appreciate the job they did and hopefully they learned a little bit. Council Member Horton thanked the interns and stated that he hopes to see them in the future and being productive citizens in our community.

C. HARDEEVILLE/JASPER COUNTY SIB APPLICATION

City Manager Griffin reported that last Thursday they went to Columbia and made a final presentation to the South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank Board, an organization put in place by the state legislature to fund projects of great economic significance in the state, primarily infrastructure projects. The application must be a minimum of \$100M to the Bank and must provide significant jobs, economic growth and tax base for an area to be eligible. City Manager Griffin stated that the City has worked with Jasper County and the Stratford Company LLC, who

is developing the Riverport project, and put together an application to the Infrastructure Bank. A local match of 20% is required and we have provided a match of 43% on a \$120M application. City Manager Griffin and Economic Development Director Ted Felder reviewed the actual powerpoint presentation that was made to the State Infrastructure Bank Board. Mr. Felder thanked Senator Clementa Pinckney, Dr. George Hood, Mayor Bostick, Jasper County Administrator Andy Fulghum and Hardeeville City Manager Kevin Griffin for making the presentation, and is pleased to report that the SIB Board approved our project by a six to one vote and is now eligible for funds. Mr. Felder also thanked Ms. Linda Nease and Council Member Horton who attended the presentation to the SIB Board. City Manager Griffin added that there were questions raised related to the Jasper Ocean Terminal and the Garden City Terminal and they tried to make very clear that regardless if the commerce is coming from the Garden City Terminal or the Jasper Ocean Terminal they want it to happen in South Carolina. City Manager Griffin stated that with our application being accepted, at this point anything we do to move forward with any other funds whether they be Federal and Stratford can go ahead and start their investment, all will now be eligible towards our match. The State Infrastructure Bank does not have new funds this year; we anticipate those happening next year or the year after. Regardless, we can move forward with the project, and we feel very positive that ours stacks up extremely powerful and well against any of the other applications. This is strictly looking at creating new jobs and new investment in the State of South Carolina, Jasper County and most of all Hardeeville.

Mayor Bostick thanked Ms. Nease as a citizen representing Hardeeville in Columbia. Mayor Bostick stated we have a good staff and council and they will continue to work on what we have going on for our children to have jobs in the future.

Council Member Foskey stated before the actual presentation to the SIB Board, the staff went to each board member personally and gave the same presentation over the last few months. They have been working very hard to get some high paying jobs here.

Council Member Horton emphasized and concurred with the Mayor that they have one heck of a staff. They had to work very closely with Jasper County to get this application to the point that it is and it shows that through all of us working together, concentrating on a common goal, it is amazing the things that we can accomplish. We were up against some big guns in Columbia and Mr. Felder was being very polite in his reference to Senator Leatherman. He was very poignant with his questions and he did everything he could to discredit our application. Council Member Horton commented that the citizens need to be aware of the job that Senator Clementa Pinckney did for us, he went up against a senior member of the Senate; he was polite but firm and never backed down. He made his point and made it well known to the rest of the Board and in the end result we got what we went after and Senator Pinckney should be credited for that.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. JASPER ANIMAL RESCUE MISSION (JARM) REQUEST

City Manager Griffin deferred to Assistant City Manager Slocum. Assistant City Manager Slocum reported that at the last City Council meeting, Ms. Gabbard presented the budget for the Jasper Animal Rescue Mission and informed everyone about the shortfall in their budget versus what funds the County had allocated to them. At that time, Ms. Gabbard reported that they had a shortfall of \$14,800 and they were requesting \$7,400 from the City of Hardeeville. It was also mentioned that the Town of Ridgeland had waived their water and sewer fees as a way to help out the Animal Rescue Mission. Council requested that this item be tabled until this meeting at which time Council could make a decision.

Mayor Bostick stated that he made a recommendation to the Council for a \$2,000 donation to the Jasper Animal Rescue Mission.

Ms. Gabbard thanked the Mayor for the recommendation to Council for a \$2,000 donation and that it will definitely help; they are two months into this fiscal year and they are already \$4,000 in the hole projected for the end of the quarter. Ms. Gabbard introduced Executive Director Kimberly Jones, a resident of Hardeeville and Board Members David and Caroline Garvade who do a lot of volunteer work with adoption events.

Council Member Willis stated that he certainly endorses anything we could do to help this organization.

Council Member Horton strongly recommended that Ms. Gabbard meet with the City Manager or Assistant City Manager regarding using HTVN. Ms. Gabbard responded that she has been working with HTVN and they have plans and will begin with a Pet of the Week.

There was no public comment. A motion was made by Council Member Horton to confirm a \$2,000 donation to the Jasper Animal Rescue Mission. The motion received a proper second by Mayor Pro Tem Powell and carried unanimously.

B. CATFISH FESTIVAL REQUEST

City Manager Griffin recognized Bill Stanley and Andy Richard with the Catfish Festival Committee. Mr. Stanley reported that this year the Catfish Festival will be a four day event. There are financial obligations and with the Council's recommendation, the A-Tax Committee has donated \$15,000. Mr. Stanley reported that they have an expense budget of \$38,000; to date they have received a total of \$17,000 in donations and sponsorships. The Catfish Festival Committee is asking the City to make a contribution to help with the balance. Mr. Richard stated that the Committee is working as hard as it can with a limited budget to put on an excellent Festival to represent the City as best they possibly can and any contribution the City would be willing to give obviously would come back to the City with people that would be coming into the City to stay over the weekend and the overall draw that will be coming to our area.

Council Member Horton asked that with this being the last Council meeting before the Festival that the Committee give a run down of what is going to occur over the four days and let the

public know exactly what the Festival is going to entail. Mr. Stanley responded that the event will start on September 12th with the Catfish Run which is a 100 mile motorcycle ride, there will be a 50/50 split to the winner; Miss Catfish Beauty Pageant will also be held on September 12th; Tuesday, September 15th there will be a golf tournament at Tradition beginning at 8:00 a.m.; Friday, September 18th will have a Land Boat Race, DJ Tex Lowther, rides, arts, crafts and food vendors; Saturday, September 19th will be a parade at 10:00 a.m.; 11:30 will have a grand opening ceremony followed by local talent and Magic Mark; at 6:00 p.m. Kenny D & the Pharoahs will be performing; and fireworks will conclude the Festival at 10:00 p.m.

Council Member Horton added that there will be a Car and Bike Show as well as a Bakeoff and Catfish Stew Cookoff on Saturday. Mr. Stanley stated that t-shirts will also be available for sale. For additional information, please call Mr. Stanley at 258-2132.

City Manager Griffin asked Mr. Stanley what amount the Committee is requesting. Mr. Stanley responded they are asking for \$15,000. City Manager Griffin stated that in this year's budget that amount was budgeted for this year's Festival and all that is needed is Council's approval to move forward.

There was no public comment. A motion was made by Council Member Foskey to approve the request for funds by the Catfish Festival Committee in the amount of \$15,000. The motion received a proper second by Council Member Horton and carried unanimously.

C. A RESOLUTION AMENDING 2009 REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

City Manager Griffin reported that at the last City Council meeting it was brought up to bring forward an amendment to the City's meeting schedule to one meeting per month for the rest of the year. This would adjust the continuing schedule for the rest of the year to four meetings, September 10, 2009; October 1, 2009; November 5, 2009; and December 3, 2009. City Manager Griffin stated that there is a resolution before the Council to change this meeting schedule accordingly.

There was no public comment. A motion was made by Council Member Horton to accept the resolution to amend the 2009 regular city council meeting schedule. The motion received a proper second by Council Member Foskey. The motion passed 4-1 with voting as follows: Mayor Bostick, In Favor; Council Member Willis, In Favor; Council Member Foskey, In Favor; Council Member Horton, In Favor; Mayor Pro Tem Powell, Opposed.

Mayor Bostick signed and read the resolution in its entirety. Mayor Bostick stated that one of the main reasons for this is that the staff has many things to do and needs more time and planning. Beginning January 1, 2010 they will resume two meetings per month.

V. PRESENTATION & APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JULY 16, 2009
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

A motion was made by Council Member Foskey to approve the July 16, 2009 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes. The motion received a proper second by Mayor Pro Tem Powell and carried unanimously.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. A RESOLUTION OF CONSENT OF THE CITY OF HARDEEVILLE TO THE CREATION OF A JOINTLY OWNED AND OPERATED INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS PARK IN CONJUNCTION WITH BEAUFORT AND OR HAMPTON COUNTY, PURSUANT TO SECTION 4-1-170 OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS 1976, AS AMENDED, SUBJECT TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE FEES IN LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES TO THE CITY, THE COUNTIES, AND OTHER RELEVANT TAXING ENTITIES
PUBLIC HEARING

City Manager Griffin reported that this would be the final resolution required to consent to the multi-county business park that is being created in conjunction with the Sembler project also known as the Okatie Crossings. In City Attorney David Tedder's absence, City Manager Griffin deferred to Mr. Sam Howell of Howell, Linkous and Nettles, bond associates. Mr. Howell stated that Jasper County has agreed to create a multi-county park; Hampton County is joining them; Beaufort County may join at some point. The two counties have approved this creation and the result is that the property taxes to be collected from the site will be divided up in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding that the City, the County and the Sembler Group entered into last year prior to their committing to develop the property. This is the last step required for the legal creation of the multi-county park so that the Sembler Group can move forward with their development.

Council Member Horton asked if there is a deadline that Beaufort County can no longer opt to enter into the park. Mr. Howell responded that there was not at this point, but it looks like Beaufort County is not going to join in.

There was no public comment. A motion was made by Council Member Horton to accept the resolution for the creation of a multi-county business park. The motion received a proper second by Council Member Willis and carried unanimously.

- B. FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF CERTAIN INSTRUMENTS RELATING TO THE ACQUISITION, USE, AND RENOVATION OF 110 MAIN STREET, HARDEEVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA (THE "PROJECT"); APPROVING THE ISSUANCE OF A HARDEEVILLE PUBLIC FACILITIES CORPORATION INSTALLMENT PURCHASE REVENUE NOTE; THE LEASE OF THE PROJECT BY THE CITY OF HARDEEVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA TO

HARDEEVILLE PUBLIC FACILITIES CORPORATION, INCLUDING AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A BASE LEASE AGREEMENT, BETWEEN THE CITY OF HARDEEVILLE AND HARDEEVILLE PUBLIC FACILITIES CORPORATION; AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A PUBLIC FACILITIES AND OCCUPANCY AGREEMENT AMONG THE CITY OF HARDEEVILLE, HARDEEVILLE PUBLIC FACILITIES CORPORATION, AND THE SOUTH CAROLINA BANK AND TRUST; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERETO. (2009-8-27B)

PUBLIC HEARING

City Manager Griffin reported that a number of weeks ago Council asked him to move forward with putting the Heyward House located at 110 Main Street, under contract, to move forward with a possible redevelopment project on that property as a public facility. The property is under contract; the purchase price of the property is \$150,000. The Finance Director has gone through the process and has received proposals from a number of banks and we have received a commitment letter from South Carolina Bank & Trust for the borrowing of up to \$300,000 on the property. This would be to close the property at \$150,000 and the additional revenue would be to secure the property and move forward with the architectural and engineering process, and the public process deciding what exactly we want that to be.

City Manager Griffin stated that this is the first reading of the borrowing ordinance. This property would be purchased through the Hardeeville Public Facilities Corporation as the Hargray buildings were done before and is the most advantageous method; we will also look at some grant opportunities if it is the will of the Council to move forward.

Mayor Pro Tem Powell asked how long they are required to run a request for bid. City Manager Griffin responded that financial services are actually exempt from the procurement ordinance as it is written for real estate. We seek out interest from any financial institutions that we deal with and we have found that in this market a number of institutions, especially those we have not done business with in the past, are reluctant to do any loaning of money at this time.

Mayor Pro Tem Powell asked if buying this piece of property does not fall under our procurement ordinance. City Manager Griffin responded that the method of purchasing real estate is exempt from our normal procurement procedures which would be for goods and services. Because it is the purchase of real estate it would be a different process as set up in our procurement ordinance.

Mayor Pro Tem Powell stated that in his research of this property, on the Jasper County Tax Assessor's page, the land is valued at \$31,000 and the house is valued at \$121,000 for a total of roughly \$153,000. Mayor Pro Tem Powell stated that the City is looking to borrow \$300,000 which is a ten year note and asked what our annual payment would be if the City took the entire \$300,000 in the next 12 months. City Manager Griffin responded that it would be roughly \$36,000. Mayor Pro Tem Powell then stated that the City would be paying \$360,000 for

property that is tax assessed at \$151,000, and would be paying more than double what is assessed on it and he has a hard time paying that much of his and the citizen's tax monies for this piece of property.

Mayor Bostick stated that one reason he is pushing to buy this property is because buying property is the best place the municipality can put its money.

Mayor Pro Tem Powell stated that he wanted to let the citizens know that no appraisal has been done and that Mr. Griffin assured him that before the bank loans the money an appraisal will be performed. Mayor Pro Tem Powell asked for clarification that if this house is not suitable to be renovated, is it the town's intention to demolish it and save the land. Mayor Bostick responded that the Heyward House is one of the oldest homes in the City and we want to try to preserve it. Mayor Pro Tem Powell remarked that he asked the question because if the City takes a loan out in this amount for property and the structure is deemed to be demolished how does it affect the loan because it is now just a piece of property instead of a house and land. Mayor Bostick responded that he believes any property in the City could not currently be purchased for less than \$150,000 so we would not lose. Council Member Willis stated that it is his belief that because of the land value and where it is located in three to five years the value is going to increase. Hardeeville is now the fastest growing city in the southeast and that in itself will have some bearing on the land values.

Mayor Pro Tem Powell stated that the land is almost one acre and as it sits right now the land is only appraised, and although he understands it is a low estimate, at \$31,000, to him it is a big difference and a hard thing to swallow seeing his tax money going to something like this.

Council Member Horton stated that it is hard to put a price on history; it is hard to put a price on the value of what this structure and this property means to our community. We have an opportunity to save something here that can benefit not only us but many future generations to come. We have an opportunity to do numerous things with this property from a museum to possibly the future expansion and building of our library to a cultural center. There are numerous opportunities for grants, assistance, and cooperation with people such as SCAD students who are looking for projects such as this to get involved in. We have a Historical Society in town that is doing a great job with our museum and are always looking for things to get involved in. To bring this building up to a code where the public can actually enter the building and use it, we are going to have to do a tremendous amount of work to it and don't be surprised that three years down the road you see nothing but the stud walls and the roof left because that is what it is going to take to get this building into shape that it will be open to the public. We will have a piece of history that we are preserving, a great part of our community and it is something that once it is gone it is never coming back. Opportunities like this do not come by every day and we have to seize them when we have the opportunity. It is going to cost but it is going to bring this community together. Council Member Horton stated that years ago when he was President of the Chamber of Commerce, he secured the building that was on this site for use as a small business incubator and how that brought this community together. People came out with wheel barrows and shovels to clean it up and get it ready. There were seven or

eight small businesses in here for a period of time until they could no longer afford to keep up the building; it got passed the point that it could be salvaged. We have something there that we could salvage. Council Member Horton stated that he, the City Manager and all of the Council Members have had the opportunity to go through this building. Everybody in here pays property taxes, everybody looks at their assessed values on their property when they get their tax notices, and everybody knows that the County tax assessors are notoriously low. So, for the County tax assessors to show \$151,000 that tells him that they are getting a pretty good deal. Council Member Horton stated that he looks at this as a tremendous opportunity to save a piece of this City's history and if we don't save it, it is never coming back.

Council Member Foskey reminded the City Clerk that he will abstain from voting due to a conflict of interest with this property.

Ms. Kathleen Wilson, President of the Hardeeville Historical Society, commented that the Society voted unanimously to support renovating the Heyward House and when they made that decision they did so because of the historical nature of the home. It was built in 1890 and it is the second oldest building still standing in Hardeeville. Ms. Wilson stated that the Society had the opportunity to tour the building and considering how old it is, the building is in pretty good shape. The building could be applied for historical status and with that it qualifies for certain funding. The building could be used as a museum, a tourist information center with a gift shop, a cultural center or a meeting facility; there is a lot of potential.

Ms. Rhonda Cradle asked if this is a private ownership house at this time and is that the reason why Council Member Foskey abstained from voting because it is his brother's house. Ms. Cradle commented that with all of the different things that the structure could possibly be used for as far as the historical value, was there not something already done by the Historical Society deeming this house was built after a period of time that would fit the criteria to make it historical to save it, to renovate it, to save the history of it. And, in order to get that house up to par for our future, our children, our visitors, and for ourselves, we have to get it internet ready meaning rewiring, plumbing, parking area, and accessibility for handicapped people. Ms. Cradle stated that she applauds every one of the Council for doing a good job in Hardeeville, but she has a problem with this particular location possibly being deemed as a library or a multi-media center for our students and our children. To invest money in this to possibly have to tear it down, Ms. Cradle stated that she does not see the feasibility. Ms. Cradle asked that since it is a possibility that taxpayers money may have to be used in this structure, will the public have an opportunity to walk through the property now, before anything is done, to get a feel as to where monies will be allocated to bring this property up to par for whatever usage it is being planned for. Ms. Cradle commented that great things are happening in Hardeeville and she is very proud of Hardeeville, this is just one instance that she does not see the feasibility in it. Ms. Cradle stated that if you want to build something and invest up to \$300,000, she thinks that a structure brand new from the ground up would be a lot better and a lot more usage would be contributed to that factor. Ms. Cradle added that these are only questions and she is open to listen to any answers, but make her know that this particular location is a benefit for every citizen in Hardeeville whether they want to know the historical value or whether they just want to know where there tax dollars are going.

Mayor Bostick responded to Ms. Cradle's questions stating that they would probably not have the chance to walk through the building as it is not open to the public. Mayor Bostick addressed the parking issue and stated that this facility has a lot of parking on the side, back and front.

Ms. Richie Reed commented that she regrets that we have not had the foresight to preserve more history in Hardeeville and Jasper County. As a former high school history teacher and a current adjunct history professor at Savannah State University, Ms. Reed stated that when you teach history to anybody it is always good to have the artifacts available. There are churches that have been renovated but the historic value of seeing how it was in the past is missing because people wanted to modernize. If you have the property, it can be restored and research can be done to find out the most cost effective way of doing it. Ms. Reed stated that she hopes that we will continue to have a vision and foresight to preserve and restore.

Ms. Joyce Meeks commented that she disagrees with the idea of buying this building. There are other places in Hardeeville that are historical, such as Dr. Carroll's office, which can be used now. There is parking, and a lot of land in the back where a house used to be. If the City bought that property, it could be used now, it is not something that has to be renovated. Ms. Meeks asked what if you buy this house and it costs \$2M to renovate it which is not out of sight with the prices today; and on historical property you have to be very careful what you add and don't add because it will take away from the historical value. Ms. Meeks does not see Hardeeville putting that much money into something that can't be used now, it probably will be ten or twenty years down the road before it can be used as a library or a historical center and the taxpayers will wind up having to pay for it and it is not right. Ms. Meeks added that if you are going to buy something, buy something now that you can use and Dr. Carroll's office is definitely historic, it has been there over 50 years. There is a lot of history in this town that could be preserved and some of it can be used now. If you bought the land now at Dr. Bhimbira's office, right behind that is the old health center; the old jail is still back there and if you bought the whole lot you would be better off moneywise than you would be buying a piece of property that doesn't have parking.

Mayor Bostick thanked everyone for their concerns.

There was no public comment. A motion was made by Council Member Horton to accept the first reading of Ordinance 2009-8-27B. There was no second and the motion died.

C. AWARD OF 2008-2009 CERTIFIED ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT AUDIT
CONTRACT
PUBLIC COMMENT

City Manager Griffin reported that we are currently in the third year of our three year audit process with Baird and Company Financial. City Finance Director Dennis Averkin put forward a RFP; we have the results of that and he will present those to you this evening and make a recommendation on an award of our audit firm. Finance Director Averkin stated that we have

received four proposals, one of which is our current auditor, Baird & Co. Of the three new firms that bid, the lowest was Kline, Branch & Kochenower & Co. out of Gaffney, South Carolina. Given financial considerations, if it is the Council's will to change, Finance Director Averkin recommends that we accept the lowest bid.

There was no public comment. A motion was made by Council Member Horton to approve the award of the 2008-2009 Certified Annual Financial Report Audit contract to Kline, Branch & Kochenower & Co., of Gaffney, South Carolina. The motion received a proper second by Council Member Foskey and carried unanimously.

VII. MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Griffin recognized Police Chief Richard Nagy. Chief Nagy reported on the Road Check Program. This is a continuous operation for the Police Department; when they started the road checks, the arrests and tickets were triple of what they are now. They have backed off a little bit and are creating randomness. The road checks have been very effective and they are seeing a reduction in the incidents and the type of activity as a result.

Chief Nagy reported on the Drug Enforcement Program. The configuration for drug enforcement in this area is the Drug Task Force. There is a single task force that works in conjunction with each other, Beaufort and Jasper Counties. There has been some interest about SLED resources coming in. The SLED agents will not work independently in a jurisdiction, they work in support of a drug task force. Hardeeville currently does not have somebody on the drug task force but that does not hinder the fact that when there is an issue in the town, they can notify the task force and they come in and conduct investigations. Chief Nagy stated that these things become very integrated, involving a number of jurisdictions, so they are very careful not to do something that could possibly compromise an ongoing investigation. They have an ongoing communication flow with the drug task force. Chief Nagy stated that they are hopeful with the grant which they are supposed to hear about next week, that they will have an agent funded as a result and they can dedicate that person to the drug task force. These things are very proprietary and confidential in nature, Chief Nagy has met with SLED and the drug task force, and they are working in conjunction with a number of things. There are a lot of things in motion out there that the average person doesn't know about in terms of drug enforcement because it is confidential for obvious reasons. When you see the police department doing or not doing something there is a reason maybe that is occurring because they do not want to compromise an ongoing investigation. Chief Nagy stated that in this forum this is what he wanted to mention, to let the Council know that it is in a forward motion and there is an awful lot of activity and they would be very surprised about what is going on; when you have the I-95 corridor running through a community you are going to have issues with drug enforcement. Chief Nagy added that the Council would be very pleased to see the results the drug task force is getting and the police department is working very close with them.

City Manager Griffin deferred to Economic Development Director Ted Felder. Mr. Felder reported that Congressman Joe Wilson will be conducting his annual District Bus Tour all over

the ten counties he represents. On Thursday, September 3rd at 4:00 p.m., Congressman Wilson will be at Tradition, his Hardeeville stop and everyone is invited to come and see him.

City Manager Griffin reported that we have ramped up our efforts with both the Police Department and the Zoning Department in nuisance enforcement around the town. They have worked with a number of property owners who have been able to get yards and different issues cleaned up both commercial and residential. There are a few out-of-town landlords that are not here in the community and we have gone through the proper notice process with those and we will be moving forward and do some demolition and yard cleanup. There are five properties that will be listed in the paper in an RFP for general maintenance contractors, landscape contractors, for demolition of both property and trailers and buildings. The locations are 1826 Jenkins Avenue, the demolition of a trailer and general property cleanup; 40 St. Philips Avenue, vacant structure that has been condemned to be removed; 26 St. Philips Avenue, vacant structure that needs to be removed; 827 Jenkins Avenue, general property maintenance issues that will be cleaned up; Argent Square, property in need of mowing and general upkeep. These are the first properties that have gone through; we have a considerable notice requirement both by state and local ordinance that requires that we go through the processes. We have gone through all of those processes; we have done our best to contact these property owners and asked them to please comply. City Manager Griffin invited all the Hardeeville contractors in the area to please take a look and if at all bid on these properties so that we can get a good deal for the City and move forward in getting things cleaned up.

City Manager Griffin reported that we have had very good turnout at the last few fishing rodeos and Recreation Director Joe Gailey informed him that the ponds were shocked today. They have done a fish survey and the early recommendations are to take some of the fish out of these ponds, and as soon as we get the final report we will be having a fishing event.

City Manager Griffin reported that the Jasper County Chamber of Commerce will be putting on Tailgating with the Alabama Blues Brothers at the Jasper County Farmers Market on September 12th. There will also be a viewing of the Georgia versus South Carolina Gamecocks game that day.

City Manager Griffin reported that the entire week of September 12th through September 19th will be the Catfish Festival events. There will be more information at the September 10th meeting.

City Manager Griffin reported that there will be a Public Meeting on the Business License Ordinance on Wednesday, September 2nd at 5:00 p.m. There are some proposed changes to lift some of the burden off of our small businesses and redistribute the way our business licenses are being done. Information will go out to the business owners tomorrow.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. DISCUSSION OF EMPLOYMENT MATTERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH S.C. CODE OF LAW 30-4-70(A)(1).

A motion was made by Council Member Horton to recess for five minutes then move into executive session. The motion received a proper second by Mayor Pro Tem Powell and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Council Member Horton to return to regular session from executive session. The motion received a proper second by Mayor Pro Tem Powell and carried unanimously.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Council Member Horton and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Powell to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Lori Pomarico, City Clerk

Date

SEAL