

## **MINUTES**

A Regular Meeting of Walterboro City Council was held at City Hall on Tuesday, October 9, 2012 at 6:15 P.M., with Mayor Bill Young presiding.

**PRESENT WERE:** Mayor Bill Young, Council Members: Paul Siegel, Dwayne Buckner, Charles Lucas, Randy Peters, Tom Lohr and Bobby Bonds. City Manager Jeff Lord, City Clerk Betty Hudson and City Attorney George Cone were also present. There were 18 persons present in the audience.

There being a quorum present, Mayor Young called the meeting to order and gave the invocation. Council Member Buckner led the pledge of allegiance to our flag.

### **PUBLIC INPUT ON AGENDA ITEMS:**

No public comments were made on agenda items.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

1. **Ordinance # 2012-14**, An Ordinance Authorizing the City of Walterboro to Join with the Walterboro-Colleton County Airport Commission and the County of Colleton in Granting an Easement to South Carolina Electric & Gas Company Over Property on Rivers Street Near Robertson Boulevard, TMS # 236-00-00-139, **Second Reading.**

A motion was made by Council Member Lucas, seconded by Council Member Peters, giving Second Reading and Adoption to Ordinance # 2012-14.

In discussing the motion, Council Member Buckner asked what are the plans SCE&G has for this easement? City Manager Lord noted that SCE&G would be running their new transmission line to the south side of town.

The motion for approval then passed unanimously.

2. **Ordinance # 2012-15**, An Ordinance Authorizing the City of Walterboro to Join with the County of Colleton in Granting an Easement to South Carolina Electric & Gas Company Over Property on Rivers Street Near Robertson Boulevard, TMS # 179-04-00-154 and TMS # 179-04-00-189, **Second Reading.**

A motion was made by Council Member Peters, seconded by Council Member Bonds, giving First Reading Approval to Ordinance # 2012-15. The motion passed with all members voting in favor.

Council Member Buckner then stated that he wanted to go on record acknowledging that his mother-in-law passed away with pancreatic cancer, and this is a very debilitating type of cancer.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Consideration to Have the City Manager Investigate the Construction and Operation of a City Community Swimming Pool**

A motion was made by Council Member Buckner to have the City Manager investigate the construction and operation of a City community swimming pool. Council Member Bonds seconded the motion.

**MINUTES/Page II**

In discussing the motion, Council Member Siegel asked what has already been done regarding recreation, such as a YMCA or some other public initiative to provide those type of recreational facility?

Mayor Young responded that over the years, the question of the City building a community swimming has come up. This goes back as far as I can remember with my association with Council, where this has come up every so often. I think, a lot of people know there was a push at one time to try to have a YMCA which went on over several years. I think there was a board that met that tried to work toward doing that. Of course, they never really got to the swimming pool stage. They started out, but it did not materialize.

Mayor Young further stated that the County considered having a swimming pool and I think, did a good bit of research. I assume it did not get funded as a park project and it was decided that it was cost prohibitive. The other part of that is, and this is certainly a noble idea, whether or not it's economically feasible for us to do. I think this is why it is on the agenda. We don't have any information and most of this is to gather information. The County actually is taking over the active recreation for the County. They did not do it, or plan to do it, but this certainly falls under active recreation. We (the City) agreed to do the passive recreation. Of course, you know that we are in the process of spending \$1.2 million on renovations of our parks. This is some of the history, which I know, and this is certainly a noble idea.

Council Member Lohr then said, I was on the Recreation Commission for some time until about 2006 or 2007, and I was asked to do some research to see if any other recreational facilities had done this. Mr. Lohr noted that he had talked with several persons in the recreational department from other counties. I think that the County just wanted some information. Basically, I will give you a synopsis. It's a real expensive thing. You are not going to have any swimming in the months probably from September to March. School begins and school activities usually take up some of the young folks time. The facility won't crank up again until March or April. So, I will say April, May, June, July and August. That's 5 months and you are going to have to maintain it for 12 months. Mr. Lohr mentioned other problems with weather conditions and paying employee wages during those times. As one result of his research Mr. Lohr stated, you are not going to have a lot of young folks using the pool, as compared with their use of other sports activities. So, be cautious about what other things may compete with having a swimming pool. Council Member Lohr also pointed out that this is not a moneymaking thing. He noted that older persons would probably use the pool more. They would like it for exercising and rehabilitation. One person Mr. Lohr spoke with suggested that if we were going to have a swimming pool that it is structured right and that we stick to the rules made. It's not free. Somebody will have to pay. In conclusion, you will have about 5 months of swimming and 12 months of maintenance.

Mayor Young then said, I think that the question before Council is whether or not we want our staff to spend the time to get us more information on this, and I think that is the motion. If Council wants staff to spend the time to do that, then it would be appropriate to have it as an agenda retreat item as we go into the budget year.

Council Member Bonds then questioned why this item was on the agenda today?

Council Member Buckner responded, I asked to put this on the agenda. We had a presentation at our last meeting from the Colleton Co. Recreational Commission and I asked them specifically whether or not they had in their plans to build a swimming pool. His answer to me was no. So, that was something that was off the table. It is clear that we have a need for this in our community. The newspapers can find where

**MINUTES/Page III**

several individuals have drowned in Colleton County in the Edisto River. We currently have no opportunities for individuals to learn how to swim. Right now, our Colleton County Sheriff Department is busing some kids to South Carolina State University to teach them how to swim. That happened last summer. I think they had about 40 or 50 children in that program. We need a pool, and it is something that is needed. Everybody can benefit from it. I am concerned about the issue of whether or not we can afford it, but if we should do at least a study to see what it's going to cost, this is just the first baby steps. Just to see whether we can do it and how much it would cost, and then come back and make a decision as to whether or not this is something we want to do. I think it is needed, and we've got new construction and new things going on in Walterboro. It will be a part of a new Walterboro. This needs to be a place where folks can swim and learn to swim. We had a swimming pool back when I was a small child and I don't know what happened to it. It was over there at the end of Ivanhoe Drive. So, I am urging my colleagues on Council to at least take the first baby steps and direct the City Manager to at least look into it. That's all this motion is, to just look into it.

Council Member Lucas pointed out that the YMCA had community support and they had another YMCA willing to charge to have one here, but they required that you had to have \$500,000 in the bank before you could even get started. The money was the factor. I am in favor of the County having the swimming pool. I don't see any need for us to venture into something if we are not going to do it, or keep it up. I think the liability is going to be high, including the initial cost. As the Mayor has said, that's an active recreational facility and the County should be the one providing that service or possibly the school system.

Mayor Young then said, I couldn't imagine us having a community swimming pool and then saying nobody but City residents can use it. What I am saying is that City people pay County tax, so if this were going to happen, it would be better that it's a County entity. I think the County did look at it, but again the question before Council is whether or not you want staff to gather this information, and to at least take the first step toward seeing what would be involved.

Council member Bonds pointed out that this might be something on the horizon by the County. He suggested that the City wait and see what happens.

Council Member Buckner again expressed concern that Council act on this now. He said that this type facility would just make our City better. It would be beneficial to not only City residents and County residents, but also anybody who wants to come to swim and learn. I am just asking our Council to just let our manager look into it. We are not agreeing to it and how we could possibly pay for it. But if we have the alcohol sales amendment that's on the ballot for November, that's a possible revenue stream that would pay for an aquatic center or a swimming pool to be built and keep it running.

Mayor then stated, even if we don't pass this motion, I don't see why we couldn't ask the County, informally, to give us whatever research and data they may have gathered when they were looking at the pool. We could see what they had and how much it would cost, and that might not require too much time for our staff, since it's probably already in a file over there. That might be an informal way for us to get more information.

The Mayor then asked the Council Members if they would object to staff contacting the County to get whatever information they have? No objections were made.

**MINUTES/Page IV**

The motion made by Council Member Buckner to have staff investigate the construction and operation of a City community pool then failed on a vote of 1/6 with Council Member Buckner voting in favor of the motion, and Mayor Young and Council Members Siegel, Lucas, Peters, Lohr, and Bonds voting against the motion. Mayor Young then added, but staff can call the County to get their information to see if there is anything we can do.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

There were no Committee Reports given.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

A motion to enter an Executive Session was then made by Council Member Buckner, seconded by Council Member Lucas and passed unanimously. The Mayor announced that the meeting will convene into an Executive Session for receipt of legal advice.

The meeting then entered into an Executive Session.

The meeting returned to Open Session, and there being no further business to consider, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Council Member Buckner, seconded by Council Member Lohr and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:06 P.M. Notice of this meeting was distributed to all local media and posted on the City Hall bulletin board at least twenty-four hours prior to meeting time.

Respectfully,

Betty J. Hudson  
City Clerk

**APPROVED: December 12, 2012**