

Aberdeen City Council Meeting
April 28, 2008

Roll Call: The Aberdeen City Council Roll was called with the following results:

Present: Mayor Bennett, Council President Elliott, Councilwoman Young, Councilmen Kupferman, and Hiob

Also Present: Douglas Miller, City Manager
Phyllis Grover, Director of Planning & Community Development
Opiribo Jack, Director of Finance
Matthew Lapinsky, Director of Public Works
Randy Rudy, Chief of Police
Monica Correll, City Clerk
Doris Manner, Recording Secretary

Mayor Bennett called the meeting to order in the Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m. The prayer was led by Chief Randy Rudy and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Kupferman.

The Minutes of the April 14, 2008 meeting were approved as submitted.

PRESENTATIONS:

1. Proclamation for the Annual Poppy Drive, American Legion Post #128, Angie Conlon

Mayor Bennett presented a proclamation and announced May 2008 as Poppy Month in the City of Aberdeen. This served as a reminder of the sacrifices made for our freedom and to honor those who defended us. Angie Conlon, 2nd Vice President and Poppy Chairman, thanked the Mayor and Council for their support.

2. Proclamation in Recognition of Takara Taylor

Mayor Bennett and Councilman Hiob presented a proclamation to Takara Taylor in recognition of her accomplishments and activities in the local and national communities.

3. Boys and Girls Clubs of Harford County – Ken Darden, Executive Director

Ken Darden introduced himself to the Mayor and Council as the new Executive Director and discussed how the organization has a positive influence on young people. He also thanked them for all their support.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Fiscal Year 2008/20089 Budget Ordinance No. 08-1
2. Constant Yield Tax Rate

Douglas Miller, City Manager

Mr. Miller said that the Budget and Constant Yield Tax rate are related. There are four funds: general, water, sewer, and Ripken Stadium. Both the Budget and the Constant Yield Tax Rate were advertised in The Record newspaper on April 11 and April 18. The Budget Ordinance was introduced on April 14. There will be a May 5 Work Session to discuss the Budget and public comments made tonight to prepare for Budget adoption on May 12. Mr. Miller stated that the tax rate will be set at the meeting on May 12.

The Budget is a priority setting document for the municipality for the next 12-18 months. They strived to maintain the level service and still reduce the tax rate. There were two priorities for FY09; enhance customer service by adding a receptionist in the lobby, and an emphasis to enhance the appearance of the City by purchasing a street sweeper.

Most of the services fall under the general fund budget and are supported by tax and fee revenue. It was established in Budget Ordinance No. 08-1, a tax rate of \$0.71.5 and that was the current tax rate in the FY 08 Budget. The Mayor, Mr. Jack and he reduced it by a penny and a half to bring it down to \$0.70. The water rate has been held, even though chemical and electricity costs have increased. The sewer rate cannot be held due to the increase in costs of chemicals, electricity, and the mandate to upgrade our waste water plant to Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR) technology. This will be reflected in a budget amendment probably in the second quarter of the fiscal year.

The second public hearing deals with the Constant Yield Tax Rate. The State requires the municipalities to advertise that we are increasing taxes even if the tax rate stays the same. For us to maintain the same exact dollar revenue from real estate taxes as we did in the current fiscal year, the constant yield tax rate would be \$0.65.7. Even though we are not raising the tax rate, in fact we are reducing it, we have to say we are raising taxes and that the Constant Yield Tax Rate is \$0.65.7. For the record, the tax rate will be set, along with the Budget, on May 12.

Opiribo Jack, Director of Finance

Mr. Jack presented a Power Point presentation. [Exhibit A, Available at City Hall] In summary, the total Budget request (all funds) is \$20.2 million, real property tax rate remains at \$0.715 per \$100, water rates remain unchanged, the sewer rates will have to increase to cover the operating cost and the ENR upgrade (\$11,000,000), salary increase of 3%, new receptionist position, Stadium fund shortfall (\$293,074), and the General Fund is flat.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (Budget/Constant Yield Tax Rate):

1. Mr. Bob Hartman, 226 Paradise Road;

Mr. Hartman presented questions and asked justification on the following:

- Water Fund Revenues, miscellaneous income \$500
- Sewer Fund Revenues, appropriation of retained earnings \$96,100
- Interest income on leases on the Stadium Fund
- Executive General Fund expenditure increase of \$43,021
- Elective salary decrease
- Police training funding seems to be absent
- General Fund personnel cost on public works street increase
- General Fund miscellaneous expenditure showed 57% increase
- Rainy Day Fund audit in 2006 and 2007 showed monies left in fund, are not reflected now
- Sewer Fund Expenditures Waste Treatment Plant, no vehicle fuel reflected.

2. Ms. Karen Heavey, 634 West Bel Air Avenue;

Ms. Heavey was concerned about water/sewer funds and rates and wanted a reduction in water rates since water fund showed a decrease in expenses (53%) and the sewer fund an increase (6%). Ms. Heavey submitted a page of questions to the Mayor and Council as follows:

Some Thoughts and Questions Regarding Aberdeen City Budget for FY09

Re General Fund Revenue:

Pg. 3: details of additions/abatements/discounts? Loss of \$5,534 FY07, \$8,000 FY09

Pg 3: details of Misc. income/other? Loss of \$41,985 FY07, \$50,450 FY09

Pg 4: trash sticker \$184,000 while expensed (pg 11) at \$160,000?

Re Water Fund Revenue:

Pg 6: loan proceeds (FY08) approx \$3,000,000 – How much has actually been spent? (Pg. 15 shows loan payments approx \$220,000 for FY08 and FY09?)

Re Stadium Fund Revenue:

Pg 8: Huge increase? FY07 actual \$14,500 - FY08 \$181,000 - FY09 \$200,000

Re General Fund Expense:

Pg. 9: Explain need for both janitor salary \$19,638 and janitorial service \$30,828

Pg 10: Reduce the expense for Gen. Govt – Heritage committee (\$9,000 less), Army Alliance (\$2,500 less), etc.

Pg 12: On Line payment fee \$1,200, also in Water and Sewer expense as \$4,895 each. How does city benefit? How many residents use it? Is cost justified?

Telephone expenses in DPW: Clarify/justify costs. Cell phones? How many? Etc. Total approx \$20,000 (Streets: \$7,000, Sewer: \$10,000, Water: \$2,500, Cost of Service: \$2,000)

Vehicle maintenance, gas, etc: ~ \$200,000 for police, \$130,000 for DPW. Take-home cost?

Stadium Operating expense increase from \$1,000 to \$10,000? Why? Is \$5,000 reasonable?

No new position for central receptionist – find a way to utilize existing personnel.

Miscellaneous Expenses: Clarify what these funds include.

General Fund increase from \$50,000 to \$78,400 for FY09. Reduce by at least \$20,000
Water and Sewer funds increased from approx \$20,000 to over \$60,000 each! If any of these expenses are related to development plans, etc, the council should consider an increase in application fees. Reduce each by at least \$30,000 (\$60,000 total)

Is \$25,000 payroll study included somewhere? We don't need it.

Donation to Aberdeen Vol. Fire Department up by \$30,000 – \$15,000 increase instead.

Reductions in expenses for these areas could reduce the budget by over \$100,000.

Capital Projects: Consider reduction in the \$400,000 for I & I Projects in Sewer Fund
What is a jet truck? Does the use justify a \$295,000 price tag?

Anyone else contributing to the \$200,000 Heat Center Water Tower design?

Rainy Day Fund: How is the fund to be handled? Consider a small reduction to complement savings in other areas to provide a decrease in the property tax rate.

\$100,000 less in this fund plus cuts in miscellaneous expenses could easily fund a 2-cent reduction in the tax rate.

Karen R. Heavey
634 W Bel Air Avenue
Tel. 410-272-2410

3. Mr. George S. Barrett, 706 Beards Hill Road;

Mr. Barrett expressed concerns about the condition and lack of sidewalks in some areas of Aberdeen. He wants a parking apron near 84 Lumber for the tractor trailers.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- 1. Ms. Janice Grant, 428 Law Street;

Ms. Grant announced that special speakers and writers will be coming to Aberdeen and may speak at Mountain Christian Church. This will be announced. They hope to raise funds for scholarships for those in need.

- 2. Ms. Karen Heavey, 634 West Bel Air Avenue;

Ms. Heavey mentioned that the Doodlebug Shuttle, used in past history, could be a potential viable source of transportation between APG and within the City of Aberdeen. She also wanted an update on the Charter Review Committee.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION:

- 1. Ordinance No. 08-2, Proposed Townhouse Amendment to the Development Code (Introduction)

No motion was made for introduction.

BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL:

- 1. Unfinished Business – None
 - a) Commission Appointments, Mayor Bennett

Appeals Board – 5 Members, 1 Alternate, 3 Year Term

Renew the term to 7-1-10 for: Marguerite M (Peggy) Diamond
Patrick Faircloth
James Kelton
John Landbeck
Adding as alternate, term to 7-1-08: Karen Heavey

A motion was made by Councilman Kupferman and seconded by Council President Elliott to approve the Appeals Board appointments.

The motion was passed with a vote of 5 – yes.

Appearance and Preservation Committee – 12 Members, 2 Year Term

Addition of new members, term to 7-1-10: Jennifer Bennett
Glenda Large
Amy Unglesbee

A motion was made by Councilwoman Young and seconded by Councilman Kupferman to approve the Appearance and Preservation Committee appointments.

The motion was passed with a vote of 5 – yes.

Board of Election Supervisors – 3 Members, 2 Year Term

Renew the Term to 1-1-10: Mary Law

A motion was made by Councilman Hiob and seconded by Councilman Kupferman to approve the Board of Election Supervisors Appointment.

The motion was passed with a vote of 5 – yes.

Parks and Recreation Board – 12 Members, 3 year Term

Addition of new member, term to 7-1-08: Sanford Fisher

Mr. Fisher will replace Bob Lee Geddes, who recently passed and will be missed.

A motion was made by Councilman Hiob and seconded by Councilwoman Young to approve the Parks and Recreation Board Appointment.

The motion was passed with a vote of 5 – yes.

Economic Development Commission – 13 Members, 1 Year Term

Renew the Term to 7-1-08: Patricia Donovan
George Engleson
Chuck Jacobs
Steve Johnson
Don Lewis
Mike Lozinak
Mark Stromdahl
Kathy Wajer
Linda Walls

Addition of new members, term to 7-1-09: Don Curry
Matt Christ

A motion was made by Councilman Kupferman and seconded by Council President Elliott to approve the Economic Development Commission Appointments.

The motion was passed with a vote of 5 – yes

2. New Business – None
3. Business from the Director of Planning and Community Development

Ms. Grover said she submitted a grant today to the Maryland State Highway Administration called Safe Routes to School to construct 800 linear feet of sidewalk leading to George D. Lisby Elementary School in the amount of \$54,000.

A notice was received from Maryland Department of Natural Resources that we received a grant for the Community Parks and Playgrounds Project for the Plater Street Project in the amount of \$74,000.

4. Business from the Chief of Police

Chief Rudy said that in Operation Street Sweeper they have conducted two of the ten planned operations; April 11 was DWI check point and April 18 was a prostitution detail. Both were very effective regarding the number of arrests. These will continue through the summer months.

In regard to in-service training, they conducted an intensive gang recognition and motus operandi training geared for the local issues and crime scene evidence collection training for line officers. The Havre de Grace Police will join them for in-service training sessions for the first time. The instructors and courses are fully certified by the Maryland Police Correctional Training Commission.

Chief Rudy will be attending the Law Enforcement Executive Development Session put forth by the FBI and applied locally through the Harford County Sheriff's Office May 5 – 9.

5. Business from the Director of Finance – None
6. Business from the Director of Public Works

- a) 20-Year Life Extension Study for the APG Waste Water Treatment Plant

Mr. Lapinsky says this study will encompass the entire plant for recommendations on capital projects over 20 years for viability and reliability of operation for that time period. This is funded and paid for by APG in the amount of \$147,950.

A motion was made by Councilman Kupferman and seconded by Councilman Hiob to approve the bid from Stearns & Wheler.

The motion was passed with a vote of 5 – yes

b) Fee Schedule Proposal for the Showmobile

Mr. Lapinsky stated that this is a viable asset for the City and money is lost constantly due to labor, delivery and set up. The fee schedule would be:

- No fee for City of Aberdeen (COA) sponsored and associated events
- COA based service clubs and organizations - \$30.00/City employee per hour for transporting, setting up and tearing down
- Nonprofits, governments and related government agencies - \$75.00/day and \$30.00/City employee per hour for transporting, setting up and tearing down
- Commercial businesses - \$75.00/day and \$50.00/City employee per hour for transporting, setting up and tearing down

City employee hours will be adjusted annually in July.

A motion was made by Council President Elliott and seconded by Councilman Hiob to approve the Fee Schedule for the Showmobile.

The motion was passed with a vote of 5 – yes

Mr. Lapinsky also stated that he is waiting for the sureties from LAI Construction for Bush Chapel Road. The contracts are finished. After this, they can get started.

7. Business from the City Manager

Mr. Miller stated that City of Aberdeen is very successful in securing grants in a very competitive environment and commended Ms. Grover in her abilities in regard to securing these grants.

Mr. Miller would like to have the Work Session on May 5 instead of May 19 in order to discuss the Budget. The Mayor and Council agreed.

8. Business from the Council

Councilman Hiob asked who pays the light bills at Ripken Stadium and Mr. Miller told him that we do not pay this. The Budget looks accurate and would like to incorporate LEOPS. He commended Jim Litke and Earth Day held on April 19th. There was a property damage accident on Old Philadelphia Road this morning. He commented on the cartoons found in The Record newspaper.

Councilwoman Young said that, although she does not always like what she reads, she can pick up bits of wisdom. She thanked Jim Litke for Earth Day and politely and respectfully suggested music volume control. Councilwoman Young

commented that she is planning some alternative numbers to the proposed townhouse ordinance.

Councilman Kupferman said he will soon be celebrating 30 years in government. He feels that water and growth of the City are two very crucial issues facing them now.

Council President mentioned that we should all help in the beautification of the City by sweeping the sidewalks after mowing, keeping weeds out of the gutters/streets, and clean up trash discarded by others. While she walks, she notices the problem not normally observed from cars and is glad Mr. Lapinsky is getting the street sweeper.

9. Business from the Mayor

On Saturday, April 26, Mayor Bennett hosted a morning meeting with Aberdeen Pastors here at City Hall to exchange information. Saturday, April 27, he attended a meeting at St. Joan of Arc where Kyle William Dowdy was honored for attaining the rank of Eagle Scout. Mayor Bennett gave him a Certificate of Appreciation from the Council and Citizens of Aberdeen. On Tuesday, April 29, he and Councilwoman Young attended the APG Arbor and Earth Day Celebration. He also congratulated Jim Litke on Earth Day which was a huge success.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

1. Mr. Bob Hartman, 226 Paradise Road;

Mr. Hartman mentioned the Harford County Property Tax increase; he feels that the citizens cannot stand another increase.

Mayor Bennett said for the record, "the overall budget right now, for this coming fiscal year, is less than last year."

2. Ms. Janice Grant, 428 Law Street;

Unity in the Community will be held on Saturday, May 3, in Festival Park. This is sponsored by a 501C3 Group and contributions are tax deductible. Ms. Grant mentioned that several organizations attending this event could use financial contributions. They also have a newsletter, newspaper, and radio program.

3. Ms. Louise Costello, 122 William Powell Ct.;

Ms. Costello is very concerned about a vacant home on Gemcraft property located on the corner of William Powell Ct. and Beards Hill Rd. It has been trashed and set on fire

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Unity in the Community, Saturday, May 3, Festival Park 11a.m. – 6 p.m.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL – MEETINGS

Work Session: Monday, May 5 4:30 p.m.

Council Meeting: Monday, May 12 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.