

**CITY OF TALLADEGA
CITY COUNCIL CALLED MEETING
25 February 2008**

The City Council of the City of Talladega met in a called meeting on Monday, 25 February 2008, at 5:00 p.m., in the City Hall Auditorium, the regular place for such meetings. The meeting was called to order and the following were present: Councilman Eddie Tucker, Council President Horace Patterson, Councilman Donnie Miller, Councilman Lance Grissett, Councilman Jimmy Davis, Mayor Brian York, and City Manager Sue Horn.

Resolution #1637 awarding contract for Parks & Recreation Department's Central Air Conditioning Unit(s) at Brecon Recreation Center.

Motion by Councilman Davis with a second from Councilman Miller to enter into an agreement with Specialty Contracting & Supplies for the Brecon Recreation Center HVAC unit for a cost of \$5,912.00. AYES: All.

Councilman Tucker stated that at the last meeting he was not ready to vote on this Resolution because there was some question as to what all was included in the bid submitted by Specialty Contracting & Supplies. Their bid was the lowest but there was not enough detail submitted as to what work was to be done and what materials were included. The City Manager stated that after discussing with the Recreation Department Assistant Director, she was assured that both bids were for the same unit and work and that is why the recommendation is to accept the lowest bidder. Councilman Tucker asked if that was in writing. City Manager indicated that if the contract was not according to the specifications, it would not be signed. Councilman Grissett requested that the resolution be amended with the statement "*and properly installed.*"

Motion by Councilman Grissett with a second by Councilman Davis to amend Resolution 1637 with the addition of the statement "properly installed." Roll Call. AYES: All.

Council President Patterson welcomed Ms. Ellen Austin, Community Development Director for East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission. Ms. Austin indicated that she had worked with the City and the administration of federal grants for several years and was looking forward to working with the City again this year. She indicated that she had attended an application workshop in Mobile last week and there were several specific things that the state agencies would be looking for in grant applications.

Applications are due at noon on May 15th for competitive applications which would be water, sewer, streets, drainage and downtown revitalization projects. The Community Enhancement fund applications which include community centers, senior centers, parks, etc. were due at noon on August 1, 2008.

The state is expecting \$26 million (\$7 million less than last year) in grant money to allocate. The City of Talladega will be competing for the large city fund (population over 3,000) and the maximum amount to apply for is \$500,000. This money is from the federal Department of Housing and ADECA has been administering these grants since 1982. Any city that has an open grant from 2005 or earlier may not apply this year. All open grants must be closed by March 31, 2008 to apply for any grants in 2008 cycle. City Manager indicated that the completion notices are in the newspaper for Bemiston and others.

Ms. Austin then discussed the City's match requirement on any application for a grant. A minimum match of 10% was required, but in order to maximize points on getting the application funded it would be necessary to go higher than 10%. Last year the average match percentage for accepted applications was 62%. This shows that the agency is encouraging local governments to maximize the use of other funds and to view the CDBG as gap financing.

The City may only apply for one fund not both, therefore it must be decided if the City will go for a competitive grant or a community enhancement grant. The maximum for a community enhancement grant is \$250,000.

A feasibility study and/or income survey will need to be performed. The threshold for low/middle income population for both categories of grants is 51%. Definition of low/middle income population is \$10,000 for single to \$50,000 for an eight (8) person household.

City Manager asked about in-kind match requirements. Ms. Austin indicated that there is no limit on the match that can be done as in-kind. She did stress that in-kind match often breaks down because deadlines of getting the work done are difficult to meet for a City whose employees are already working on daily operations and other projects.

Councilman Tucker indicated that he had previously budgeted \$250,000 for his district and if a \$250,000 Community Enhancement grant was added to that the Knoxville Community Center would be well on its way. Ms. Austin indicated that to construct a building a substantial City match would be needed. Councilman Tucker stated that the money had previously been budgeted so it should be there, besides if the City goes for a competitive grant for downtown, there is not a low income population downtown.

Councilman Tucker further stated that there was no recreational center in his district. Councilman Davis stated that there was not one in his district either and there was a limit to what the City can spend on recreation. Councilman Grissett indicated that there was an existing facility in Bemiston that was barely usable. The City needed to complete what was started in Bemiston. Councilman Tucker agreed that the Bemiston project needed to be completed, but he had been patient and waited and cooperated with the Council on other worthy projects, but "before I die" I want to get a community center built in Knoxville where there is a large population of low income children. Council President Patterson polled the council for their opinion on which fund to apply for. Councilman Davis indicated community enhancement. Councilman Grissett stated that if a community enhancement grant could not be obtained to finish what was started at Bemiston, then he would favor a community development grant for the City's infrastructure. Councilman Tucker restated his desire for a community enhancement grant.

Ms. Austin indicated to Councilman Grissett that the City could not apply for another grant to finish the Bemiston Center. Councilman Davis asked how do you do a downtown grant so far as showing the income of the population. Ms. Austin said she had never written a downtown grant before, but she would find out what was needed and what had been funded in the past with other cities.

Councilman Miller said he had not decided as to what type of grant he would support. Council President Patterson requested that the council come back with a decision at the next council meeting. Councilman Tucker indicated that all the preliminary work had already been done for the Knoxville Family Life Center so it would be the easiest to quickly finish an application for. Ms. Austin said she would be present at the next council meeting on March 3rd.

Council President Patterson then recognized Ms. Mary Pat Lawrence. Ms. Lawrence addressed the council, stating that she had represented the City for two years and during that time the City was very successful in getting federal funding which included a \$250,000 police technology and for 2008 a \$150,000 drug task force grant. She further stated that a lot of the funding that is available is exactly what Ms. Austin had described, such projects as education and water works. It was just a matter of knowing where that money is, identifying the city's needs, identifying the amounts that are needed, staying familiar with what is available and where the trends are going.

Councilman Tucker stated that Ms. Lawrence's firm had been paid \$60,000 a year and in return had received "how much in grants?". Ms. Lawrence stated that it was \$250,000 the first year and about \$150,000 the second year. Council President Patterson stated that it was a good investment.

Councilman Grissett asked if the \$150,000 for the Drug Task Force would be available in the next few months. Ms. Lawrence indicated it was for the 2008 fiscal year. Councilman Tucker asked Ms. Lawrence if she was responsible for the City getting the money. Ms. Lawrence indicated that she has served as an advisor and accompanied the Mayor to advocate for the City's projects.

Councilman Tucker stated that it was one of the hopes of the Council to find money for the family life center and asked if she would be able to help on it. Ms. Lawrence stated that funding is available for that, if the council decides that is a priority. Also, it depends on what the current delegation is interested in, so she believes it is helpful to have a variety of projects, such as building, transportation, etc. Councilman Davis stated that he felt it was important to have someone in Washington DC to get anything done for the City. Ms. Lawrence continued by saying that she knew the council was too busy to watch what was available for funding in Washington. Councilman Grissett asked if the appropriations were usually earmarked and not competitive. Ms. Lawrence indicated that that was correct.

Councilman Tucker said that sidewalks and drainage projects are not glamorous projects but putting up a building would get more attention and that he felt Congress would be more acceptable to a building than pipes underground. Ms. Lawrence stated that it depends on the members of Congress and that buildings are extremely competitive and difficult to get funding for. Councilman Miller asked if it would be easier to get projects concerning flooding areas in the city neighborhoods. Ms. Lawrence stated that nothing is easy, that appropriation is a long scale project and the unity of the Council is important to the project. This work is a marathon not sprint. Councilman Tucker asked about the cost and Ms. Lawrence indicated that the rate would be the same as when she was with the other firm (Van Scoye).

There was some discussion on the updated financial numbers provided by the City Manager. The City Manager indicated that some of the projected budget figures are not as much as they were last year – that they were scaled back because revenue had a large shortfall in the last budget. Sales tax and expenditures at this time of year should be at about 40% and most are running true to form. Councilman Miller asked if there was any way to know which licenses had not come in yet. City Manager asked if the Councilman was referring to business license or taxes, as the state audits the taxes. The Manager indicated that the City may go over in the business license on what was budgeted inasmuch as some licenses are bought throughout the year. Councilman Grissett asked about delinquent business licenses and was told by the Manager that after January 31st notification will be sent out as delinquent; another notice in March as to additional penalty and another notice by April 1 the company is doing business without a license and code enforcement would go out to visit any still delinquent.

There was further discussion on the budget percentages and how shortfalls are happening all over the country and not just in Alabama or Talladega. City of Talladega is more sales tax based instead of property tax based and, therefore, will have to continue to tighten our belts. The Manager further stated that all the department heads are to be commended on keeping expenditures down. It was mentioned that the Library fund appropriation needs to show up on the report presented to the Council. Heritage Hall was mentioned in regards to the lack of financial information on the budget report. Manager stated that it needs to be decided if Heritage Hall is to be a component unit or a department of the city. Council President Patterson asked Councilman Davis to bring a recommendation to the council concerning Heritage Hall's status.

Council President Patterson brought up a need in the Police Department for five new police cars and that he had a proposal before him for a lease purchase at a cost of \$115,000 with a cost of \$40,000 the first year. Motion by Councilman Davis with a second from Councilman Grissett to amend the budget by \$40,000. AYES: All.

Council President Patterson asked for an update on the City Manager search by the Mercer Group. Councilman Davis indicated that the search firm has found a number of applications and that the deadline to apply had passed.

The firm was currently reviewing and narrowing down the applicants. Councilman Tucker asked if they would submit perhaps the top ten to the Council for review. Councilman Davis advised the search committee would narrow the applicant list down before it came to the Council.

Council President Patterson then asked for an update on the water shortage, indicating that Sylacauga had removed their water restrictions. Councilman Grissett stated that though lake levels are now up to normal levels after the last rainfall, Water Department Head James Brasher had presented him with listing of levels in the wells and they are not back to normal. Sylacauga is surface-water driven system and Talladega's is a well-water driven system, with minimal surface water used and, therefore, it will take longer for the well water levels to get back to normal. Another factor in continuing to conserve water is the drain that the race in April will put on the system. Department Head Brasher's report indicates that the Council should not even consider removing restrictions until the end of March, if even then. Councilman Davis asked if the City was maximizing surface water. Mayor York noted that the figures for January 2007 and the figures on the amount of water used in January 2008 were almost identical indicating that not much conservation of water had occurred. Councilman Miller stated that the newspapers help was needed in continuing to get water shortage information out to the public.

Councilman Grissett stated that Court Street had been paved today and was ready for traffic.

Motion by Councilman Miller with a second by Councilman Grissett for adjournment.

Minutes recorded by: _____
Elizabeth Cheeks

AUTHENTICATION

I, Sue A. Horn, City Clerk of the City of Talladega, Alabama, do hereby attest that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the proceedings of the City Council of Talladega, Alabama, which met in a regular session on Monday, 25 February 2008, at City Hall.

Sue A. Horn
City Clerk/ City Manager