SPECIAL MEETING/WORKSHOP OF CITY COUNCIL
JULY 23, 2020 – 4:00 PM
TELECONFERENCE

LIVESTREAM:
https://www.facebook.com/cityofgtown/

1. CALL TO ORDER

Notice of this meeting has been made in accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws as amended.

MEMBERS PRESENT
Mayor Brendon M. Barber, Sr.
Council Member Tupelo Humes
Council Member Carol R. Jayroe
Council Member Al Joseph
Council Member Hobson H. Milton
Council Member Clarence C. Smalls

MEMBERS ABSENT
Mayor Pro Tempore Rudolph A. Bradley

ALSO PRESENT
Dr. Sandra E. Yúdice, City Administrator
Mrs. Elise Crosby, City Attorney
Ms. Stephanie Buccione, City Clerk
Mr. Orlando Arteaga, Engineer
Mrs. Debra Bivens, Director of Finance
Mr. Will Gunter, Water Utilities Director
Mrs. Gladys Rutledge-Livingston, Human Resources/Risk Manager
Mr. Alan Loveless, Director of Electric Utilities
Ms. Angela Rambeau, Director of Planning and Community Development
Chief Kelvin Waites, Georgetown Police Department
Mr. Isaac Williams, Fleet Superintendent

ABSENT
Mr. Tim Chatman, Streets and Sanitation Manager
Chief Charlie Cribb, Georgetown Fire Department

2. ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Mayor Brendon M. Barber, Sr. called the Special Meeting of City Council to order at 4:00p.m. and requested all cell phones or electronic devices be turned off or placed on mute, with the exception of first responders, so as to not interrupt the meeting.

3. ROLL CALL

4. PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A. Rental Registration Program Proposal and Discussion.

Ms. Rambeau stated there are several benefits for the City to have a Rental Registration Program. She said many homes in the City are in need of repairs or improvements and do not meet health and safety standards for the residents. She said many residents do not know their rights and what they can ask their landlord to fix. She said for some residents that do contact their landlord with their requests, they are turned down. Ms. Rambeau referenced an ordinance that states renting or leasing an unfit dwelling is unlawful. She said this program would be a way to enforce this ordinance fairly and protect our residents. The City has approximately 1,349 rental units. She said 265 units are owned by the Georgetown Housing Authority and 553 units are considered large apartment complexes. Ms. Rambeau stated approximately 660 units would be included in this program, which would consist of 550 family homes and 110 mobile homes that would need inspected. Ms. Rambeau reviewed a map that showed the rental houses are spread throughout the City. She said the program consists of five points. The first is to have everyone register their unit. Then the City will do initial inspections on all the registered units and the landlord will have the opportunity to correct any violations. Ms. Rambeau said they will issue certificates of occupancy, have annual registrations, and do follow up inspections every three years. Ms. Rambeau reviewed the registration guidelines and stated there will be a $50 registration fee. She said they will require a local agent and it can be a company or an individual. She said the landlord would notify the City within five days if the current tenant moves out, so the City can do an inspection before a new tenant moves in. Ms. Rambeau stated an exception to the program would be if the units are owned or operated by a state agency because they already have a program in place. Another exception would be if the property has an onsite property manager or if someone owns a duplex and resides in one of the units. Ms. Rambeau said there would also be exemptions for family members that live in a separate dwelling on the property and are not paying rent. Ms. Rambeau pointed out the goal for the inspections is to make sure basic needs are met. She said the $50 registration fee would include the initial and follow up inspections. She said for any further violations and inspections, the fee would be $75. Ms. Rambeau stated if the landlord failed to have an inspection, there would be a $250 penalty. She said it is important to have compliance of the program and would be willing to work with everyone. Ms. Rambeau said by using our current staff, the initial inspections would take three years to complete. She reviewed the list of codes. She said if there are three or more violations within a year, the application would be rejected. Ms. Rambeau stated there are four phases in rolling out the program if Council wants to move forward. The first phase would be to put together packets of information for tenants and landlords and to hold informational meetings to let everyone know what is coming and what is expected. The second phase would be to gather information obtained from the meetings to incorporate into an ordinance to bring to Council for approval. She said the third phase would be

to start rolling out the program with registrations, inspections, and issuing certificates of occupancy. The fourth phase would be maintenance and would include annual registrations and follow up inspections to be done every three years. Ms. Rambeau said subsequent registrations after the first year would be $25 and subsequent inspections would be free. She said they reviewed similar programs across the country and state to obtain this information. Discussions followed.

5. ADMINISTRATION

A. Discussion of City Employee Handbook Policies which includes proposed changes to 4 current policies and 3 newly proposed policies.

Mrs. Livingston reviewed policies that include: Tuition Reimbursement, Travel and Subsistence Allowance, Vehicle Management Program, and Payment of Wages. She said these items were discussed at the Budget Retreat back in March. Mrs. Livingston said the following policies for Temporary Emergency Teleworking, Social Media, Teleworking Application Form, Teleworking Policy and Procedure, and Teleworking Agreement Form are needed due to the pandemic and labor relation matters. Council Member Joseph thanked Staff and Human Resources for making changes to the policies that were discussed at the retreat in March and for making the necessary changes due to the pandemic. Council Member Jayroe suggested a log be taken to record mileage manually in the City vehicles to mimic the state vehicle program since the devices that were discussed at the retreat in March for the budget had to be removed. Dr. Yúdice agreed that it can be done manually.

6. ELECTRIC

A. Discussion of Electric Infrastructure Improvements in the 900 Block of Front St.

Dr. Yúdice stated a property owner in the 900 block of Front Street has requested for the City to bury the power lines so they can renovate two properties. Mr. Loveless explained the current situation of the pole and confirmed it is a very busy pole. He said the property owner's survey stated the pole is within five feet of a utility easement at the rear of the 918 Front Street property. Mr. Loveless said when they were approached by the property owner, they considered various options such as relocating the pole, but it would still pose some problems. Mr. Loveless stated the best option would be to convert some of the overhead lines into underground lines. Mr. Loveless said this would serve all customers involved including the City. He said they will need to go to the Courthouse to confirm the utility easement's boundaries. He stated some concern regarding one of the properties on this block is currently for sale. Mr. Loveless said redevelopment of the property would be a benefit to the City and a positive impact on the hospitality tax revenues. He confirmed the properties are in the TIF (Tax Increment Financing) district and they would continue to improve property value in the future. Mr. Loveless said these positive financial impacts to the City would outweigh the costs to complete the project. He said they estimate the cost will be $65,000. Mr. Loveless said they would propose to the property owner to pay for all the conduit that would be used on their property and the estimated costs would be $5,000. Mr. Loveless said this project was not

budgeted but there are funds available to cover this project. Mayor Barber asked how long the project will take to complete. Mr. Loveless said it will take approximately two weeks to complete but a timeline has not been discussed with the property owner. Discussions followed. Dr. Yúdice stated the investment for renovations on these properties would be $250,000-$350,000. She said the cost of purchasing these properties was $300,000. Mayor Barber asked for the total investment to the developer to include improvements and the purchase of the property. Dr. Yúdice confirmed it is $550,000-$650,000. Mayor Barber said this is the reason Council and Administration had worked on developing a TIF district, so the additional tax dollars can be used to reinvest and make improvements throughout the entire city.

B. Motion to Approve Electric Infrastructure Improvements in the 900 Block of Front St for an Estimated Expense of $60,000.

Council Member Jayroe moved, seconded by Council Member Joseph.

Mayor Barber called for the vote.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [5 TO 1]**
MOVER:	Carol R. Jayroe, Council Member
SECONDER:	Al Joseph, Council Member
AYES:	Barber Sr., Jayroe, Joseph, Humes, Smalls
NAYS:	Milton
ABSENT:	Bradley

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the Special Meeting of City Council.

Council Member Humes moved, seconded by Council Member Joseph.

Mayor Barber called for the vote.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Tupelo Humes, Council Member
SECONDER:	Al Joseph, Council Member
AYES:	Barber Sr., Jayroe, Joseph, Humes, Milton, Smalls
ABSENT:	Bradley

The Special Meeting adjourned at 4:57pm.

Stephanie Buccione
City Clerk

Date Approved: