CITY COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP
APRIL 25, 2019 – 4:00 PM
MUNICIPAL COURTROOM
GEORGETOWN, SOUTH CAROLINA

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.
Mayor Pro Tempore Rudolph A. Bradley
Council Member Sheldon A. Butts
Council Member Tupelo Humes
Council Member Carol R. Jayroe
Council Member Al Joseph
Council Member Clarence C. Smalls

ALSO PRESENT
Mr. Carey F. Smith, Interim City Administrator
Ms. Stephanie Buccione, City Clerk
Mr. Orlando Arteaga, Engineer
Mrs. Debra Bivens, Director of Finance
Mr. Brent McClellan, Assistant Fire Chief
Mr. Tim Chatman, Streets and Sanitation Manager
Mr. Will Gunter, Water Utilities Director
Mr. Alan Loveless, Director of Electric Utilities
Chief Kelvin Waites, Georgetown Police Department

ABSENT
Mrs. Elise Crosby, City Attorney
Mrs. Suzanne Anderson, HR Manager
Chief Charlie Cribb, Georgetown Fire Department
Ms. Angela Rambeau, Director of Planning and Community Development
Mr. Isaac Williams, Fleet Superintendent

MEDIA
Georgetown Times - Mr. David Purtell
GAB News - Mr. Scott Harper

2. ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Mayor Brendon M. Barber, Sr. called the Budget Workshop/Special Meeting of City Council to order at 4:00 p.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. PLASTIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS TASKFORCE

Mr. Carey Smith introduced Ms. Erin Pate from Coastal Conservation League and Mrs. Cindy Thompson, Coordinator for Keep Georgetown Beautiful to speak about a public education and awareness task force they are working to put together. Ms. Pate stated although it may not be the right time for Georgetown to go down the path of putting up a plastic ban, the citizens should become more aware of the concern. We are working on putting together a task force of ten to twelve people that will represent different parts of the City. It will be a diverse group of people that will represent the citizens of Georgetown. It will be called a Plastic Pollution Education and Awareness Task Force. The task force will meet once a month starting in May until September. The City will help pull it together and arrange meetings while she and Mrs. Thompson work together to facilitate the meetings and make sure citizens on the task force are deciding what needs to happen in the community. The task force and citizens will make the decisions regarding what actions they will take. Mrs. Thompson stated that she is excited and looking forward to putting this task force together because it is going to be a great diversity of the City. She is also hopeful that it can serve as a catalyst to use as a community outreach for future events. Ms. Pate stated that Coastal Conservation League has previously worked with other municipalities up and down the coast in a similar way. She also mentioned that the State is working on a Bill that is sponsored by the plastic industry that would stop Municipalities from passing bans. The Bill has died this year but it will be back for consideration in January 2020. Council Member Butts asked how and who will develop the task force. Ms. Pate responded that she and Mrs. Thompson are working with Mr. Smith on making sure different areas of the community are represented. Ms. Pate and Mr. Smith welcomed any names of individuals that Mayor and Council may have and who would have an interest to serve on the task force.

4. REVIEW OF ANTICIPATED REVENUES AND PROPOSED EXPENDITURES FOR FY 2019/2020 BUDGET.

Mrs. Debra Bivens greeted Mayor and Council and stated that the budget process began at the Retreat on March 15 and 16. At that time, in addition to the budget presentation, each department had an opportunity to present their budget information and requests as well as shared strategic planning ideas they had for the year and upcoming year. Mrs. Bivens stated the Retreat was a success and definitely a learning experience for everyone. Mrs. Bivens said she has met with Mayor and Council individually and listened to their concerns and issues they may have concerning the budget. Mrs. Bivens stated the budget is balanced. The total amount of the budget is $33,216,868. To balance the budget it took some of the reserves from the Fund balance. From the General Fund, we are using approximately $105,000, which leaves us about $2.7 million in the Fund balance for the General Fund. Included in the budget is a Business License Rate Increase of 8% or $160,000 in the General Fund. It has been almost fifteen years since there has been a Business

License Rate increase. Also included in the budget is a percent increase for City employees. The average is 3% or $175,000. Increases are done through Merit and Longevity. Increasing the Water and Wastewater Rates was also included in the budget. Originally discussions were to increase these Rates 1.5%, but the Rates were reviewed and it was not enough so the numbers were ran based on a 5% increase. With the Water Rate Adjustment of 5% it would yield $112,645. The impact to a customer who uses approximately 3,000 gallons of water a month would be $0.98 cents a month or $11.76 annually. Council Member Joseph asked if 3,000 gallons of water a month is an average City wide and Mrs. Bivens confirmed t it is an average number City wide for a residential customer. The same approach was used for the Wastewater Rates. A 5% increase was projected which would yield $121,540. The impact to a customer who uses approximately 3,000 gallons of water a month would be $1.38 a month or $16.56 annually. The total for both Water and Wastewater would be $2.36 a month or $28.32 annually. The consensus is to move forward with this rate increase.

Mrs. Bivens stated during the Retreat discussions occurred regarding credit card fees. When the City started taking credit card payments over ten years ago, Council at that time voted to dissolve the fees to customers for using their credit card to pay their utility bill. Because of the increase in customers using a credit or debit card to pay for their utility bill, it costs the City $53,000 annually. Mrs. Bivens asked if the City should continue to absorb those fees or should the City pass the cost onto the customer. Council Member Jayroe stated that everyone else charges if a credit or debit card is used or it is absorbed into the cost of doing business. She also stated that she would have no problem with passing that on to the customer. Mayor Barber stated that when you do business with the County they charge a fee for paying with a debit or credit card. He also said that for the convenience of being able to pay online it is acceptable to pay a fee. Council Member Joseph pointed out that ten years ago when Council voted for the City to absorb this fee, credit and debit card usage was almost nonexistent. He also stated that it is wonderful that the City was able to absorb this cost for ten years but we have to keep up with the times and be aware that it costs the City $53,000 annually. Council Member Joseph stated that he would be in full support of passing this fee on to the customer. Council Member Smalls questioned what form of credit and debit cards the City accepted for payment. Mrs. Bivens confirmed that the City accepts Visa or MasterCard. The reason the City decided to not take other types of credit or debit cards ten years ago is because the fees were much higher. If the fees get passed on to the customer, the City may accept more types of credit or debit cards. Council Member Jayroe asked if the banks have recently shopped rates for us and Mrs. Bivens confirmed that it is currently being done. Council Member Butts asked if the amount per transaction per customer has been determined yet and Mrs. Bivens stated that this has not been determined but she will have this amount at the next Budget Workshop. Council Member Smalls asked for confirmation of the General Fund balance and Mrs. Bivens stated $2,696,000. Mrs. Bivens concluded that all of the items discussed thus far are included in the budget.

Mrs. Bivens stated there are a few items not included in the budget but wanted to bring forward for discussion. The first item is property tax adjustment. Based on law, we can adjust the taxes on inflation by the past three years every year. This year we have the capability to adjust the rate by 3.4%. That would yield $122,000. The impact to a homeowner with an assessed value of $100,000 would be $13.60 annually. Mayor Pro Tempore Bradley stated that there were two things emphasized during the Retreat, one being increasing revenue and two getting rid of the debt. He pointed out that with what we have been presented with in regards to Capital improvement and what we are trying to do to better the City to give the Citizens a better quality of life, he doesn't see us not increasing the property taxes and making the adjustment. Council Member Joseph stated that we have a City to run and we need revenue for that so he would be in favor of considering this to be added in the budget. Mr. Smith stated that this would be new money and not appropriated. He encouraged guidance in regards to where the money should be utilized. Council Member Butts expressed concern that every year or every other year that something is increasing. He stated that he would like to see the City be aggressive enough to meet their needs and possibly avoid the need to increase costs to the Citizens next year. Mrs. Bivens responded that based on state law we have restrictions on how much we can increase rates. Mayor Barber stated we have taxes that we will never recoup. After a reassessment was done, the School District and the County accepted their assessed values and increased their millage accordingly but the City did not. He stated he told Council at that time we would never get those tax dollars back Mayor Barber concluded with the improvement and infrastructure projects going on throughout the City, Georgetown residents can actually see where their water rate taxes and other taxes are going. Council Member Smalls commented on the Road User fee increase this year through the County and he was not informed of it prior to going into effect. Mrs. Bivens confirmed that it did increase this year. She explained the municipalities would receive some of this money. She stated they contacted the County and confirmed that the City will receive $16.50 for every car that is registered in the City of Georgetown. This would equate to $83.500 for the next budget year. She also pointed out that how this money will be used is still to be determined. It could be used for roads, drainage, debt service, etc.

Mr. Smith initiated the discussion of the School Crossing Guard issue regarding the corner of Lafayette and Highmarket Streets. Mr. Smith stated he would like to take the Fire Department off of that intersection and hire two part time people and train them. He would also like to buy the proper safety equipment such as a vest and sign. He would like to continue to work with the School district on getting a traffic light at the intersection. Council Member Humes expressed concern with the safety of a part time crossing guard because of the intersection being very dangerous. Mayor Barber suggested that these part time positions could also be utilized to enforce the two hour parking policy on Front Street. The consensus is to calculate the numbers for two part time retirees and include it in the budget.

Mrs. Bivens stated another item that was not included in the budget is the Family Justice Center. In years prior we funded them $18,000 annually. It was initially

earmarked as office space but it was changed to general support. The City received a letter from the Family Justice Center requesting to be included in the upcoming budget. We are recommending $9,000 which is half of the amount of their original request. The money would come out of the General Fund. Mr. Smith stated a representative from the Family Justice Center will present at the next budget workshop to provide more information on their request for money.

Mrs. Bivens presented the next item up for discussion which was new positions. The departments requested four new positions. The Fire Department has requested one position of $34,675 annually for a Firefighter/EMT to reduce overtime. The Police Department has requested two positions of $41,500 annually each for Police Officers but we are recommending one Police Officer and that they would start in January 2020. The Public Works Department is asking for one position of $23,230 for a Ground Maintenance Tech. These amounts do not include benefits.

Mrs. Bivens stated that there are eight new vehicles budgeted throughout the Fire, Public Works, Police, Electric, Engineering, and Waste Management Departments. Mrs. Bivens introduced Mr. Orlando Arteaga to answer questions regarding the request from the Engineering Department. Mr. Arteaga stated both vehicles in the Engineering Department are fifteen years old and have frequent mechanical malfunctions. Mr. Brent McClellan stated that would like to replace a 1997 that has over 104,000 miles on it. Mr. McClellan stated that it has cost over $14,000 to maintain the current vehicle for the Fire Department. Mr. Tim Chatman explained that the Waste Management vehicle request is needed to service garbage cans and make service calls. The current dump truck requires $60,000 in repairs.

Mrs. Bivens said the Capital Projects Fund is quickly being depleted. After budget year 2020, we will have less than $500,000 and we started out with $3,500,000. Once this Fund is depleted, everything will come out of the General Fund.

Mrs. Bivens presented the A-Tax and H-Tax budget projections. The projected revenue is $1,084,000. In regards to the projected expenses, Mrs. Bivens stated the Kaminski House is asking for $190,000 but only $150,000 is included in the budget thus far. The Distribution thru DMO (Chamber of Commerce) is requesting $150,000 but only $120,000 is included in the budget at this time. The Main Street Design Committee has requested $123,830 but only $58,200 is included in the budget at this point. One item that was added since the Retreat is the Historic District Bicycle Path which is a GSATS project. The grant for this project is $630,000 and the City's match would be $126,000 for a total project of $756,000.
Discussions followed.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn City Council Budget Workshop/Special Meeting.

Council Member Joseph moved, seconded by Council Member Humes.

Mayor Barber called for the vote.

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

Mayor Barber adjourned the Budget Workshop/Special Meeting at 5:37pm.

Stephanie Buccione
City Clerk

Date Approved: 07/25/19