City of Peachtree City
Minutes of Meeting
August 21, 2003
7:00 p.m.

The City Council of Peachtree City met Thursday, August 21, 2003, 7:00 p.m., in the City Hall Council Chambers. Council Members attending were: Mayor Steve Brown, Annie McMenamin, Steve Rapson, and Murray Weed. Dan Tennant was out of town.

Announcements, Awards, Special Recognition

Mayor Brown recognized the Peachtree City Little League All-Star Teams who won the District 4 championships – Age Group 7/8, Age Group 9/10, and Age Group 11/12. Brown recognized the 87 Lazer White U-16 Girls Soccer Team as state champions. Brown recognized the 84 Lazer Elite Soccer Team as national champions. Youth Services Librarian Janice Dukes was recognized as Employee of the Month for August.

Approval of Minutes

Weed moved to approve the August 7, 2003, budget workshop minutes as written. McMenamin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Old Agenda Items

07-03-10 Public Hearing and Consideration of Variance Request – Highway 74 South & TDK Boulevard

McMenamin asked if the attorney would be speaking for the applicant, then said she would abstain from the vote and discussion because the attorney's law firm employed her daughter. City Planner David Rast addressed Council. Rast said there had been a discrepancy on the staff position and Council asked staff and the applicant to look at things again. He continued that staff met with the owner and his development team on the site. They had a resolution to the situation that would not require a variance and put the matter back to staff for approval. Rast said the memo in Council's meeting packet outlined the plan and staff recommended Council authorize them to move forward and work with the applicant without the need for a variance.

Rick Lindsey, attorney for Hyde Investments, LLP, owner of the property, complimented staff and said they went the second and third mile to come to a resolution. Lindsey explained that there were two sets of tape on the property. One set marked what staff and the development team put together. The darker orange tape showed what would happen when the Department of Transportation (DOT) came through. He said the resolution was good from a planning perspective and it made sense to consider what would happen when the highway was widened now. The area needed to be landscaped properly and they would accept staff's recommendation, but a variance could still be needed.

Lindsey continued that all the work could become moot once the property was developed since curb cuts would be requested. Lindsey said they could live with what was recommended, but he would like for Council to discuss and consider the variance request based on what the DOT planned to do.

Brown thanked Hyde and the staff for working on the matter. Weed also thanked Lindsey and Mike Hyde for their cooperation.

Brown said he felt they should leave the matter with staff and the Planning Commission. Weed concurred. Brown said no action was necessary at this time. Lindsey noted the compromise was a testament to people working together.

New Agenda Items

08-03-06 Public Hearing – FY 2004 Budget

City Manager Bernard McMullen thanked Finance Director Paul Salvatore, his staff, and the directors and chiefs for their efforts on the budget. He noted there had been a lot of challenges this year with significant increases in health insurance costs, pension costs, and revenue challenges. McMullen said there was now a good, sound budget that met the majority of the requirements the City had to meet in terms of taking care of the City's infrastructure.

Salvatore gave a budget overview. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is included in the official meeting file. He noted that the total combined budget was now $27,890,823, including $2.3 million of estimated carryover projects from the current fiscal year. The balance of $25.5 million was for FY 2004 appropriations, which was about a 5.3% increase over FY 2003. The budget was structured to achieve the City's revised operating cash reserve policy goals by 2006. The budget also proposed a reduction in the self-insurance reserve from $800,000 to $500,000 and reduced the Council Contingency budget by $100,000. Salvatore noted that the major budgetary issues and concerns included rising health insurance and pension costs, the shortfall in the Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) revenue, the change in the LOST distribution formula, the shortfall in hotel/motel taxes, the decline in impact fees, and the state's budget cuts. Salvatore pointed out the cut in the state's Greenspace funds cost the City $250,000 allocated for the Drake Field purchase, and the City had to make up that difference.

Salvatore continued there had been a general trend of expenditures exceeding tax revenue since FY 2001. He noted the change in projections in LOST and hotel/motel taxes made last year resulted in a shortfall in revenue projections for FY 2004 of $610,000. Salvatore attributed the trend of expenditures exceeding revenues to significant events including a pay plan adjustment to the 75th percentile, the addition of 12½ staff positions, and a rollback in the millage rate. The impact of those expenditure changes in today's dollars was about $1.4 million. Salvatore said the gap was not closing, even with this budget, and the City had a further reliance on other sources of revenue.

Salvatore said the proposed millage rate for FY 2004 was 5.283, an increase of .508 mills or 12.3% over the current rate. The proposed millage rate only exceeded last year's estimate by .019 mills. Last year's projection for this year's millage rate had been an increase of .561 mills and the proposed millage rate was just over that. Salvatore said the difference equated to $27,000. To make up for the $610,000 difference in all projections, Salvatore said they cut expenditures, looked to other revenue sources, and adjusted reserves. Salvatore continued that residents who owned a home assessed at $200,000 would see an overall increase of $67 in their tax bills, including the increase in the school system's millage rate.

Rapson noted that the Board of Education had a higher millage rate than the City or the County, so it was dramatic when the dollar amount appeared. The City's 12.5% increase was about $20 to the taxpayer. The schools had a 2.75% increase equivalent to two and one-half times that amount. Rapson said a lot of people were getting bogged down with the percent increase, but the millage rate was so low that the percentages looked a lot more than the school board's percentages. Rapson said it was important from the taxpayer's perspective that they understood that relationship.

Salvatore looked at the 10-year projection and noted that the reserve target would change during the first three years. Salvatore said the reserve policy currently was 60 days of operating expense and the proposed change was to have 13% of annual revenues in reserve. In addition, Salvatore said the separate self-insurance reserve of $500,000, which had been reduced from $800,000, would be eliminated and included in the total reserves. For that reason, the cash reserves projections for FY 2004 looked high. In 2005, the projection would be at 85% of the same target. The cash reserves budget would be back on track in FY 2006.

Salvatore looked at General Fund Revenues, which were projected at $21.8 million, an increase of 7% or $1.5 million over this year's projected revenues and included the proposed property tax increase of .58 mills. He said the LOST estimate for next year was just under $6 million, or about a 1.5% increase over this year's projections. Salvatore said they had assumed an optimistic increase in sales of 3%. The sales increase was offset by the change in the LOST distribution formula. The City would get about .67% less of the County's LOST revenue and the County would get 1% more as of January 1. Salvatore said ad valorem taxes would now be the largest revenue source, rather than LOST.

Another major source of revenue was the hotel/motel tax. Salvatore said the estimate was around $849,000 for next year, which was the same as this year's level. He continued that normally there was a 2½% increase in projections. Due to this year's shortfall and the way the tax came in, Salvatore said they hoped they could get the same amount as this year and they were looking at a $50,000 shortfall this year.

Rapson pointed out that the City was not getting the normal type of increase since the renegotiation of the LOST distribution formula. He continued that LOST was the City's number one revenue source in the past, but had dropped to number two and would remain flat for the next couple of years. Rapson said those were the numbers driving the millage rate increase, as well as the economy. Salvatore agreed and noted that the City normally saw a 5% to 6% increase in LOST revenue each year.

Brown added that all monies that had traditionally come from the state had either evaporated or been reduced, such as Local Assistance Road Program (LARP) funds and Greenspace funds. LARP funds were used to resurface roads. Any funding from the state was dramatically down.

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Brown added that all monies that had traditionally come from the state had either evaporated or been reduced, such as Local Assistance Road Program (LARP) funds and Greenspace funds. LARP funds were used to resurface roads. Any funding from the state was dramatically down.

Rapson said to remember that the City would end up with about $3.6 million in cash reserves by the end of next year, which was about 20% of the operating budget. Rapson said that was phenomenal in the state. He noted other cities were laying people off and cutting services to balance the budget.

Salvatore said the hotel/motel projections had the largest impact on the overall revenue projections for next year. He added that several compliance reviews had been conducted, including one for the hotel/motel tax. The mixed drink tax and occupational tax audits were underway. The audits would ensure the City received all the revenue it should from those sources. Salvatore said they were also looking at the Court fine structure and staff was conducting a comprehensive review of all fees and charges. Staff would get back to Council regarding any recommendations.

Brown pointed out that the Development Authority had dramatically lessened its operating losses. Brown noted that when it came time to enter into the new intergovernmental agreement that he wanted to change some of the allocations. He felt they would still come out short, but wanted to factor that in and close the gap on operating losses.

Rapson noted recent newspaper articles about the increase in Court fines and said the additional revenue from the fines was not pulled out of the air. He said the fines were now more in line with neighboring jurisdictions. The City had not just doubled or tripled fines.

Brown pointed out that Council could not tell the judge how to rule on any case. The municipal judge determined whether someone paid a full fine or did community service.

McMenamin said it had also been a few years since the recreation fees had been reviewed. She did not want to drive away the customers, but she also did not want to subsidize out-of-town users of the City's recreation facilities.

Salvatore moved on to the Departmental Operating Budgets. The proposed budget totaled approximately $19.9 million, an increase of 7.67% over the FY 2003 budget. Salvatore said the proposed 32% increase in funding for the defined benefit pension plan and the 15% increase in employee health insurance were the two problem areas. He reiterated the decrease in the self-insurance fund from $800,000 to $500,000. Salvatore explained that was because staff felt there would be less reliance on the fund since the employee insurance accounts would be fully funded.

Another big item was the street and cart path repair programs. The programs were increased by $72,000, or 11.7%. Salvatore recalled the programs were cut last year and they were trying to get the funding back up to normal levels. There was an estimated 38-year paving cycle for streets and a 25-year cycle for cart paths at current funding levels. Salvatore said funding had to be increased in the future for both programs, as well as other infrastructure maintenance.

Weed said he had a good example to show that sometimes it took money to save money. He noted the purchase of some new public works equipment that would help repave cart paths. Sometimes the City had to spend the money to get the new technology that would save the City money in the long run. Brown pointed out that Weed was talking about an asphalt ripper, which took three steps out of the paving process for the cart paths. Brown said the City would not have to haul asphalt to a landfill that would accept it, or pay to have it done.

Problems encountered that were out of the ordinary included the relocation of the Canadian geese from Lake Peachtree. As a result, the landscaping budget increased. There were also a number of fence problems throughout the City and extra money was put in the budget to take care of those problems.

Brown asked Leisure Services Director Randy Gaddo about the fences that needed to be replaced. Gaddo said the wooden fences would be replaced with a vinyl-coated chain link fence, such as the fencing used at the Tennis Center. Brown noted that the vinyl fences weathered better and lasted longer.

Salvatore continued that there were courts that needed to be resurfaced. The Fire Department also had to replace older equipment and needed training mannequins and monitors. Brown added that old equipment would go on the engines and the new equipment would be on the ambulances.

Brown discussed staff requirements. He noted that in the original 2003-2007 staff plan that 28 new positions were budgeted. The number had been revised to six positions in the 2004-2008 plan. Salvatore said there had been a hiring freeze for two years and no positions had been added. Out of the six recommended positions, only one was included in the FY 2004 budget and was only budgeted for a partial year. The position was the mechanic for the new satellite auto shop facility and the increased fleet size. He pointed out that there had been significant increases to department workloads and no positions had been added to compensate for the increased workload. As the demand increased, so did the challenges for the existing staff to maintain current service levels. Salvatore said they continued to monitor benchmarks to ensure adequate service levels were maintained.

Salvatore looked at the Public Improvement Program (PIP) and major capital expenditures. He noted that $3.1 million in new appropriations were proposed, as well as $2.3 million in carryover projects. The $5.4 million total included capital projects and equipment purchases. About $2 million of the total included projects directly related to the improvements in the 54 West corridor. Salvatore noted that the satellite auto shop facility had been planned for several years due to the expansion of the fleet and was supported by a recent fleet assessment study. The shop would also alleviate issues with unsafe and overcrowded conditions at the garage. Salvatore said staff recommended a Bricks & Mortar loan for the facility.

Salvatore continued that the City lost $250,000 in Greenspace funds that were to be used for the last phase of the Drake Field purchase. Now the entire $475,000 for the final payment had to come from local funding. As for the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) plan for the 54 West Corridor, Salvatore said the road bridge would be widened and the work would start in December. There would also be a cart path bridge running parallel to the road bridge, as well as cart path culverts on either side of the track under the bridge connecting to paths and commercial areas on the south side of the highway. Cart path connections were planned at Wynnmeade and the Line Creek nature area. There would also be another cart path bridge going over the west boundary of the City. Salvatore said there would still be a great deal of state funding for the projects, roughly 80%.

Several playgrounds were due to be replaced and the old equipment would be replaced with more durable equipment for around $40,000. The City was also replacing some wooden light poles with cement poles for safety purposes. Impact fees were declining dramatically and would soon become an insignificant revenue source. Approximately $500,000 in impact fees was projected for FY 2003. Next year, the projection dropped to $250,000. Brown pointed out that the Recreation Department was working on a maintenance master plan and those projections would be available to put in future PIP plans.

Salvatore said the City also had to start looking at a stormwater utility. Brown added that all cities were experiencing stormwater problems and that the City had some problems that would cost in the six digits to repair.

Rapson said some of the numbers in the PIP were a little misleading. He noted that, in the next few years, there were some state grants and carryover projects that would be completed. Rapson continued that there were also some material equipment purchases for the Fire Department in 2004. He noted that those purchases could be re-addressed, or expedited, after the completion of the fire study depending on the report results. Salvatore said they would normally hold off on major purchases until the tax money came in (in late December or early January). Salvatore noted that he had received a $150,000 check from the County for the Multi-purpose Rink restroom/concession area.

There were questions from the audience regarding the gateway bridge. Brown noted that the road widening and the bridge were two different projects. Brown said the Department of Transportation (DOT) took care of the state routes, but the City was responsible for the multi-use path bridge. He said they did have the dimensions for the road widening and that would not be a problem. Brown continued that the City wanted to work in conjunction with the road widening, so they were not doubling the work efforts for the abutments for the bridge.

Salvatore pointed out that, in order to get the grant commitment from the state for the bridge, the local share had to be included in the budget. Rapson explained that the state would not commit its $450,000 until the City showed its share, $112,000, was in the bank.

Questions from the audience and answers from Gaddo were inaudible regarding the sealing of the library and playground equipment.

Weed noted that the mold problem had actually happened in City Hall. Brown said they were trying to be proactive since the library was built of the same materials as City Hall. Weed asked Gaddo if the sealing of the library would be included in the bond referendum and Gaddo said that it was included.

Another resident asked what happened to the old Fire Department equipment. Brown answered it was auctioned, salvaged, or went into reserve. Rapson added that they tried to keep that revenue in public safety. He noted that the Fire Department was holding off on replacement of a fire engine and a medic unit until the City received a consultant report on the Fire Department that would tell the City what the department needed in the future. If a decision were made to hold off on those purchases, the money set aside for debt service for financing would drop to the fund balance for FY 2004.

A resident asked what happened if the State's contributions were cut two years from now. Rapson answered that only two projects were subsidized by the State – the gateway bridge and the bunker gear for the Fire Department. The programs were funded. He said the State would not give its funding if the City did not ante up its 20% share. If the City did not budget for its share, then the state would re-route its funding to another jurisdiction.

Salvatore and Rast pointed out that some of the LCI money was federal money that had passed through the state. Brown said the City was trying to seek more federal funds for projects such as cart paths since federal money was more dependable in the current economy.

A resident asked about the unfunded projects and how funding was determined. Salvatore explained the rating system used by staff. Rapson said none of the unfunded projects were budgeted in FY 2004. The projects were considered discretionary at one time and were moved to the unfunded list. Salvatore added that some of the projects on the list were essential, but the City could not afford them at this time. Salvatore said another possibility for funding, if the list became too extensive with essential projects, was to group some of the projects together for a bond referendum. Rapson said the City had always had a wish list. When revenues were better, a decision was made whether to take an item off the list and put it in the PIP. Brown pointed out that the unfunded list was re-prioritized all the time.

Salvatore moved to the debt service fund. The proposed fund was $2.1 million, an increase of 36%, or about $570,000, over FY 2003. Salvatore said it looked like a big increase, but the reason was because of the lease for the public safety vehicles. The lease ended this year and a new fleet was purchased. The City loaned itself the funds out of the cash reserves and did not pay a lease payment all year. The City would reimburse itself from the lease proceeds by the end of the fiscal year, then the $350,000 lease payments would come back into the budget. Salvatore said the satellite auto shop debt would come online at $33,000 a year. The balance was for essential Public Works equipment. Salvatore noted the City would save $50,000 in FY 2004 due to the refinancing of the 1993 bond this year. Salvatore reiterated that about $340,000 was saved in interest expense by delaying the submission of reimbursement requests to the finance company and using cash reserves.

Salvatore went over the major challenges in developing the FY 2004 budget – continued sharp increases in health and pension costs, a dramatic decrease in LOST and other revenue projections, and revenue loss from state grants. Salvatore said staff felt the proposed millage rate would support adequate service delivery, infrastructure, and cash reserve levels.

Brown said the costs for health insurance were not going down. Because the City was so concerned about the rate, all of the policies were re-bid and there were improvements on the dental plan. A resident asked if employees bore any of the cost of health insurance. Brown said they did and the resident asked if the employees could take on more of the cost.

Brown said they did not want to eliminate the ability of the person making $7 an hour to have insurance. Council had discussed putting more of the cost on employees and could have saved $25,000 by doing so. Brown said Council decided it would be better to take the hardship and to hold off on putting more of the cost on employees for another year. If the current economy continued, Council would ask employees to bear more of the burden of health insurance costs.

Salvatore noted that the workload was increasing for all staff members. The resident said that there was not a company in the country that had not asked its people to work more. She said everyone was going through tough times and everyone was taking on more. Brown said the workload had doubled in some departments and no new positions had been added in the last two years. Brown said staff was doing a lot more and things had to balance out. Taking benefits and increasing the workload at the same time caused morale problems. Brown continued that one reason the satellite auto facility was needed was due to the sub-human work conditions in the current auto facility. Larger vehicles had to be worked on outside no matter what time of year or what kind of weather.

Rapson said he was not in favor of balancing the budget on the backs of the employees for 2% of the money needed for the health program. Part of the level of service was directly attributed to the City's employees. The benefits attracted good employees. He continued that they had to keep that in perspective. The resident said all she needed to hear was that it would save money.

Weed commented that every budget got the same intense scrutiny every time. Salvatore said the City staff was truly lean and mean. The City had the least number of employees per thousand of any City around.

Brown continued that the City had very little trash and the grass got cut. The City had the lowest crime rate in Part 1 crimes in the U.S. for the City's population, with a lower number of officers than the average for the same size city. Brown said the City was doing a lot with fewer people, but that did not mean they might not have to ask more for employee health care concessions in the future.

A resident asked about the assistant city manager position. Salvatore noted that Council approved a budget amendment to include the position in the FY 2003 budget. Rapson added that there was only a $30,000 difference in the budget when the position was included.

A resident asked if the funding was in the budget for the assistant city manager, was there also a place in the budget for police officers and firefighters. Brown said the police needed an administrative person and the fire department needed an assistant fire marshal. He felt since the gap was closing on the operating costs of the Development Authority that he had submitted a proposal that would allow the positions, but the proposal had not been included yet. McMenamin said the citizen was saying the position should be assessed. Weed said Council had assessed the position and had voted on it. Rapson added that, operationally-speaking, the decision was the City Manager's and Council had approved the recommendation. McMenamin noted that the City Manager had offered to wait on the position because of the budget problems. Weed said Council made the decision and felt adding the position was the right thing to do, but nothing was carved in stone. Brown said the City had to build efficiency in the system and the assistant city manager position was an efficiency. Brown pointed out that the new computers for Code Enforcement would allow the officers to spend an additional three hours a day on the street, as well as provide proper documentation on violations. The computers were the equivalent of another person.

The resident questioned whether the Police Department had taken into account the fact that the crime rate would go up with more big box stores coming to the City. Chief Murray said they had started to see an increase in shoplifting. With more stores, there would be more shoplifting, more bad checks, and other crimes. Murray continued that they looked at the calls for service and that told them where they needed staffing. He added that the crime rate increased as preventive patrols decreased. Murray expected crimes to go up, especially with the encroachment from the surrounding areas.

Brown closed the public hearing. Salvatore said the budget would be brought to Council for adoption on September 4.

08-03-07 Consider Resolution for Library Renovation/Expansion Bond

Library Commission Chairman Chris Clark addressed Council and noted the commission was given the task to come up with a comprehensive plan at the last Council Retreat. He introduced Tom Findley and Blaine Paxton, staff members from Leo A. Daly Company, the architects for the proposed renovation/expansion. Clark went over the programs offered by the library and the statistics regarding users. He noted the types of requests were becoming more complex and the renovation/expansion would help meet the expanding needs of an expanding population. Clark said requests for services include non-English sources, foreign language classes, internet access (there was not enough space or wiring for another computer), and cultural requests. The library was starting to meet the needs of older Americans and needed larger print books and enhanced lighting.

Clark said the library continued to serve as the community information center. There was a high demand for reference material and cultural arts. Over 2,000 participated in the summer reading program. Clark continued that they did not realize 10 years ago there would be less use of microfiche and more demand for internet access. The library was an arena for citizens to display photos, quilts, and art, and served as a home school resource center. Clark continued that the library's collection grew 2.5% to 3% each year and they were running out of room to display items on the shelves. They were out of storage space. To remain viable, the collection had to grow. Nearly 50% of the population had a library card and there were over 190,000 visits to the library last year. If residents had purchased all of the books, tapes, and other materials used last year, they would have spent over $5 million.

Clark continued that, in addition to the repairs and renovations needed, the building needed to be sealed. He said there was a serious rodent problem with squirrels getting into the cracks on the masonry. Clark asked Council to allow the voters to approve the $4.9 million bond referendum in November 2003.

Findley told Council that libraries were growing all around the nation. Collections were increasing, even with computers, which took more room. Librarians helped patrons cruise through the information. Times had changed and there was much more collaboration and discussion in the library. Findley continued that students were trained to work in groups. It was a natural evolution of how people were educated. Findley continued that people came to the library to learn to use technology. New wiring was needed and wireless technology should be available.

Findley said they had listened to what was being done at the library and that the activities were outstripping the architecture and creating more problems. Areas of concern included staff workspaces, line of sight issues, poor lighting, and acoustical problems.

Findley continued that 25 children could be jammed into the children's area, but often more than 120 wanted to attend events. He said there should be a warm and inviting entry and the bathroom area was out of the sight and control of the librarians. More security was needed. Findley added that the shelves were also too close together and did not meet the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

Findley said the plan should take advantage of the natural setting. Humidity control needed to be improved and a new roof was needed. The library should allow more natural light, while minimizing glare. Findley said they wanted to be environmentally friendly and use sustainable materials and energy-saving lights. He added that the entry should be clearly marked.

Findley said 31,230 gross square feet was needed for the next 20 years. The library currently has 20,100 square feet and the renovation would add 11,230 square feet. The space should be on the main level. Additional staff would be required for two levels.

Paxton estimated the cost at $4.9 million, which included site development, landscaping, demolition, remodeling, new construction, furniture and equipment, design fees, surveying, testing, books and materials, and bond costs. Paxton said the expansion/renovation would cost the average taxpayer $25-$26 a year for 15 years. Paxton said he felt that was an acceptable expense as a parent and resident of the City. Paxton continued that the City was a special place and asked for Council's support to put the bond referendum on the ballot. Paxton said Council should let the citizens decide whether to spend the money or not.

A resident asked if the plan would be shown to residents. She continued that $50,000 for books and materials was not even 10% of the bond. Clark answered that the Library Commission had held three different workshops on the design. He said he would love to add more money for materials, but they were living in tough times and also had to keep the library viable for the future. The resident said she would rather take out the fireplace and coffee shop and put that money into books. Clark said those ideas came from citizens and were not set in stone.

Brown said one of the things that came out of the teen study was the socialization component of libraries. The overwhelming desire of teens was to have a place to congregate and talk, like a Starbuck's©. The teens wanted to be able to sit down with books and coffee. The resident expressed concern about the replacement of books ruined by spilled coffee, as well as insurance costs for a fireplace. Clark said things were planned in the operating budget. He noted that the fireplace was an idea brought up by fellow citizens.

Library Commissioner Barbara Swafford said she was very excited about the plan. She continued that people used the library more in difficult times because it was free. Swafford felt $25 a family was a deal. She said the library would charge for refreshments and that could offset some of the costs. Swafford noted that people liked to read and wanted an environment that embraced them. She said this was an opportunity to have a great place to go.

Library Commissioner Mary Ann Browning pointed out that the library was the intellectual marketplace of the City. People read for information and recreation. The library was the great equalizer between people who made $500,000 a year and people on public assistance. She continued that the library was needed to back up the education system and was a selling point for the community, as was the education system.

Rapson noted that a library was more than just books, but provided access to all text-based information. The PINES system also allowed patrons to access books in other libraries. He said they were overlooking the technology side of the equation.

Leisure Services Director Randy Gaddo pointed out that the $50,000 was not intended to fill up the library shelves. There was room for expansion. The library's budget included $105,000 per year for books. The $50,000 was in addition to the annual amount to start the collection.

Weed said that all the Council was being asked to do was to put the question on the ballot for the voters to approve. He continued that $4.9 million was the amount in the resolution for the voters to approve. By approving the resolution, Council was only approving the amount, not the plans. Weed said he supported the $4.9 million and putting it on the ballot, but he did not like everything in the plan either. The actual details on what the money would go for would come after the fact.

Another resident asked how the plan for the renovation/construction stacked up to other communities. Findley said the plan was above the median for the collection, size, and number of seats. He explained that planning was not a black and white science. Findley said the library's growth rate was 2½%, which was on the low side, but the circulation numbers were high. There was still room to add population in the City. Findley said the plan was a middle ground to maintain the excellence at the library. He added the librarians would become more critical in weeding out materials.

The resident asked if the referendum was $4.9 million or nothing. Rapson said the money would fix a poorly-designed library, HVAC, roofing, and parking. The numbers did not look out of line, but corrected past problems. He said that would be explained to the public before the election.

McMenamin noted that Clark and the architects had spoken to a civic group earlier and that they might know the library user, but they had to target the voter. She was hearing "wants" not "needs." Weed agreed with McMenamin and said they had to be prepared. He felt that $4.9 million was an appropriate number for an appropriate library design for the City. He said they had to convince people at the beginning.

A resident asked if there was a back-up plan if the referendum was voted down. Clark said there was a plan.

Weed commented that the City spent a lot of time and money exercising people's bodies. The library exercised minds and the City needed that.

A resident asked about the children's book collection and if it would be updated. Jill Prouty, technology manager for the library, said she understood the concerns about the older books. She continued that the majority of the money had been spent on children and young adults for the last two years. The library's collection included a lot of classics that were now out of print and they were trying to keep those books in good repair, but were also buying new books at an unbelievable rate. She knew there was a huge need for multiple copies and noted that the library had 14 copies of the latest "Harry Potter" book that were gone on the first day. They also purchased multiple copies of best-selling authors. Prouty continued that the library had been part of the PINES program for the last three and one-half years. If the library had purchased all the books obtained through the PINES system, the cost would have been $9.5 million.

Rapson asked about the recurring expenses and maintenance costs. Clark said the design was maximized to keep staff at the current level. He continued that they also looked at materials that would decrease the operating costs such as materials designed to let light in, but keep heating costs down. Gaddo said the operating costs would go up around $140,000 a year. Additional space would be added and one full-time and one part-time employee would be added.

Rapson felt the building was the priority and that the road could wait until later. Clark said parking was a key concern. If there were no place to park, people would not come. He added that on Wednesday mornings, mothers walked blocks to get to the library from church parking lots.

A resident asked if there would be room to expand the library again in 20 years. Paxton said the communications tower would eventually need to be replaced because it would be outdated. If the tower were removed, there would be additional space for expansion. Clark said his idea had been to build a satellite library, but that was abandoned because of staff and operating costs.

Weed noted there had been public meetings about the renovation/expansion and the board had been diligent. They needed $4.9 million and he wished them luck. He was sure they would have lowered the costs if possible. Clark said they would have.

Rapson asked about the bond question. He noted that the question was not easy to read and understand. Meeker said the bond attorney wrote the question to meet the legal requirements. Rapson said he would like to see more information on what the money paid for in the bond question. Gaddo said the document was written exactly as required by law.

Rapson moved to approve the document before Council and to put the referendum resolution and notice of the bond question before the voters on the November 2003 ballot. Meeker clarified that the motion was to actually adopt the referendum resolution before Council and that the resolution included everything needed to go forward. Weed seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Rapson said he was available to help with promoting the referendum. Weed noted that the City could not spend money to promote the referendum. Meeker said he would look into the law and see what elected officials could and could not do. Weed said the Council Members could, individually, go out and promote the referendum. Meeker said yes, but he needed to find out how elected officials were to go about it. Clark said he intended to hold a meeting to discuss how to market the question and sell it to the voters. Brown suggested that representatives from the Youth Council be invited to the meeting.

08-03-08 Consider Easement for Fayette County Communications Building

City Engineer Troy Besseche addressed Council and said the planning and engineering staff had been contacted about installing a new communications building adjacent to the communications tower. The building would sit across the property line on Drake Field. Staff had reviewed the plan, but the City did not own the land. The City was purchasing the land in phases from the Development Authority of Peachtree City. The final installment on the property was set for November. He recommended Council seek an easement from the Development Authority. He said the building would not interfere with the library's plans.

Brown asked if the City would maintain ownership of the tower and the building. Meeker said the City would not maintain ownership of the building since it was part of the 911 system. Police Chief Jim Murray pointed out that the County's new E-911 system would be coming on line and the County was not charging the City anything to be put on the system. Brown questioned whether the City would have to get permission from the County to move the building if necessary in 30-50 years. Meeker said yes and that, under the terms of the easement, the County had the right to have the building on the property.

Rapson asked if he could vote on the matter since the Development Authority owned the land. Meeker said yes. Rapson asked if the tower ever came down, would the building come down. Meeker said there would not be a need for the building if the tower were gone. The easement would also be gone. A resident asked why that location was needed for the building. Meeker said it was adjacent to the tower. Brown noted that the Police Department was also located in the Municipal Complex at one time. He said the County was upgrading to a higher standard of 911 communications.

Weed moved that the Mayor and Council issue notice to the Development Authority that they concurred with the Development Authority giving an easement to Fayette County as required on Drake Field. Rapson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Council/Staff Topics

Brown expressed concern regarding the former city attorney's ability to try cases based upon constitutionality when he composed the ordinance. He said there was a chance the variance requested in Agenda Item 07-03-10 could come back to Council if things did not go well with the Planning Commission. Brown said any waivers issued to the former city attorney by the City did not cover him for that type of action. He asked for a legal opinion. There could be other issues and he would like the matter ironed out. Weed said even if the waiver covered this type of action, he found it difficult to believe that any attorney would want to go before the state bar, or any other higher court, and say he wrote the ordinance, but it was unconstitutional.

Brown introduced Clyde Stricklin, the new Developmental Services Director. Stricklin briefly discussed his experience.

There being no further business to discuss, Rapson moved to adjourn the meeting. Weed seconded. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:22 p.m.

Jane Miller, City Clerk

Stephen D. Brown, Mayor

Pamela Dufresne, Recording Sescretary